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Landings of 1941

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LANDING

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Even in 1941, during the most difficult and tragic period of the war, the Red Army and Navy not only defended and retreated - in the very first days of the Great Patriotic War on the Danube, hostilities were transferred to enemy territory: our border guards, together with infantry, under the cover of armored boats and monitors of the Danube military flotilla landed on the Romanian coast and captured the city of Cilicia-Veke, destroying the enemy battalion, reinforced by artillery, and the border outpost. In July of the 41st, landing detachments of sailors of the Northern Fleet repeatedly landed in the German rear, disrupting the enemy's offensive operations, and in September, a regiment of Soviet marines, landing from cruisers and destroyers, pushed the Romanian troops back from Odessa.

In this book, the heroic history of the landings of 1941 is restored in great detail, many of which have only recently been declassified - thus, for the first time, full data on the reasons for the failure of the only attempt by the Germans to use tanks in the Far North and on the participation of paratroopers-saboteurs in the legendary combined landing near Grigorievka .

What is this book about (instead of a preface)

In this book, the reader will not find sensational revelations or a "new look" on well-known events. And yet, I think this book will seem new and unusual to most readers.

For the second decade in our country there is no longer a single point of view on the events of military history, and there is no longer a single scheme for writing books on this topic. The circle of authors writing "about the war" is unusually wide both in terms of educational and professional level, and in terms of their ideological views.

The reader can easily find on the shelves of any store both a book telling that everything was "very bad" and a book telling that everything was "very good".

Every year more and more pages of the Great Patriotic War become known to readers, an ever wider range of issues receives this or that coverage.

But the reader's interest in the largest and most important war for the fate of our country is not weakening and, I think, will not weaken for a long time, perhaps never.

Because with each new book it becomes even clearer how little we know about the war, how negligibly narrow the circle of events with which we are familiar.

And the landing operations carried out by the fleet are no exception here. Since childhood, most people of the older and middle generation are familiar with Malaya Zemlya, the Kerch-Feodosiya landing operation and the Yevpatoriya landing. But over the years of the war, more than 120 sea and river landings were landed. Most readers interested in our military history are not even aware of the existence of such a number of landing operations, not to mention when, where and how they were carried out.

Recently, in the wake of an ever-increasing interest in our military history, however, more and more materials have appeared on this topic. On the pages of books, articles and websites, the Kerch-Feodosia, Petsamo-Kirkines, Grigoriev and other landing operations are increasingly mentioned. But it is still difficult for us to get a complete picture of even the most famous amphibious operations of the Great Patriotic War.

Landing operations, without exaggeration, are one of the most dramatic pages of the war. They could not be stopped, like a failed offensive, or made solid and invulnerable, like a defense in depth. No matter how much preparations were made for such operations and no matter what forces were involved in them, no matter how competently calculations were made, not a single army in the world managed to avoid dramatic accidents during landings.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the course of these operations is often limited to the most general information: which units, when and where they landed, from which ships, where and for how long they fought. About 20-30 years ago, such information, like any other, was valuable and in demand. But time does not stand still and information hunger is gradually giving way to information openness. And more and more often, after resolving the questions "who", "where" and "when", the reader becomes more and more interested in the question "how".

This book is an attempt to answer this question, which is the most important for understanding the essence of the events that took place. This book deals with only three of the landing operations carried out in the first, most difficult year of the war. But the level of consideration of these operations is the most detailed of all the materials that addressed this topic both in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

The main objective of the book was to create a kind of "presence effect" for the reader - to give him the opportunity to understand the mechanism of all the events that took place. I tried to give the history of each landing operation as comprehensively as possible, therefore in the book, in addition to the landing operations themselves, the reader will get acquainted with the events that preceded these operations, occurred simultaneously with them and sometimes were their consequences. This book is dedicated to three successful landing operations of the initial period of the war. The circumstances in which they were conceived and carried out, and the forces involved in them, are different. But all of them are united by success, which was the result, as the reader will see, of a variety of reasons. Another unifying feature of all the operations under consideration is the number of landing units. In all three operations, an infantry regiment or a regiment of marines landed.

Recently, the initial period of the war has become the subject of increasing attention of researchers. The most dramatic period of the Great Patriotic War turned out to be the least covered and studied for a long time. And only in recent years have they begun to appear in significant

number of books devoted to various issues relating to this period. An increasing number of operations are becoming the subject of thorough and detailed research.

At the same time, landing operations were less fortunate than others. First of all, the attention of researchers was attracted by the most large-scale events of the first year of the war. Against the backdrop of grandiose cauldrons in which entire armies perished, and battles involving dozens of divisions, landing operations were somehow "lost".

The scale of events during the landing of sea and river assaults was, of course, incomparably more modest, and they did not directly affect the course of the war. But the landing operations of the first year of the war are no less dramatic and interesting for the researcher than the major offensive and defensive operations. In the difficult conditions of the first year of the war, landing operations were desperate attempts to stabilize the situation where it was already impossible to do it in any other way.

And relatively little attention has been paid to them in modern military-historical literature. At best, these are separate chapters on a dozen or two pages or collections that bring together materials of different levels on various operations under one cover. Unfortunately, at present, the book that you are now holding in your hands is the first in many years that is entirely devoted to the history of individual landing operations, and in fact the only book of such a volume that was published on this topic in the post-Soviet period. For the first time in our literature, this book covers the decision-making process for the described operations in as much detail as possible. The questions of who exactly initiated or, on the contrary, by whom and why such decisions were hindered, have not yet received proper coverage on the pages of our military history literature.

Combat actions are given at the highest possible level of detail. The involvement of all available sources, many of which were not previously used in writing materials on this topic, made it possible to give

the most complete and detailed picture of the events described. A huge number of combat episodes, not even mentioned in modern studies on this topic, are described with the greatest possible detail, which the materials testifying to them allow.

And the positive and negative aspects that took place in the planning and implementation of these operations are dealt with with the same degree of meticulousness. Both are part of our history and an integral part of the landing operations themselves, which to a large extent determined their development as it turned out in reality.

I tried to make the main emphasis on the description of tactical and combat techniques, from which the execution of these operations was formed. Much attention has also been paid to the human factor, the role of which in many of our successes and failures is still, in my opinion, completely insufficiently covered and is still waiting for its researchers.

In the book, the reader will find many examples of the mistakes of our command, committed at various levels and by different people. Their abundance does not indicate the author's desire to denigrate the history of the events described. It's just that these mistakes, unfortunately, are an integral part of it.

The same as the efforts of many thousands of people and their contribution to the victory. Examples of courage, desire to better prepare and implement this or that

the solution also has not yet received due recognition and fame. The reader will also learn about the many deeds of dozens of people that we can and should be proud of, although at one time they received neither the proper official assessment nor wide popularity on the pages of books and articles.

Another task of this book is to create not only the most detailed, but also the most objective picture of the events described. All three operations chosen for this book, with the possible exception of the last one, are relatively well known to the general reader. But hearing a lot about something else does not always mean knowing a lot about it.

I think that the majority of readers will change their understanding of the fighting on the Danube, which took place in the first month of the war, as well as the landing of the Grigoryevsky landing. Attention to both topics was paid by many authors who have recently become well-known. The corresponding chapters are available in the works of Viktor Suvorov and Alexander Shirokorad, dozens of articles have been written on these topics of varying degrees of detail and reliability. I hope this book will greatly complement, and in many cases even change the ideas that the reader has formed after becoming acquainted with these materials.

Part one Landing on the Danube The first landing of the war Prehistory

(June 17, 1940 - June 21, 1941)

The section of the Danube from Lake Yalug, where the river is divided into two branches (girls), before the confluence of the Kiliya girl in the Black Sea, belonged to the cover area No. 6 according to the action plan of the troops of the Odessa Military District (OdVO) to cover the state border.

Of all the plans to cover the five border districts, the OdVO plan turned out to be the only one that corresponded to the real situation, was fully implemented in the pre-war period, and was successfully implemented after the outbreak of hostilities.

And it is no coincidence that by the time the Southern Front was formed on June 25, the OdVO actually completed the task of covering the state border, which was reflected in the directive of the Headquarters of the Civil Code on the creation of the Southern Front:

"The tasks of the Southern Front: General - to defend the state border with Romania. In the event of an enemy crossing and flying into our territory, destroy him and be ready for decisive offensive actions.

And it was the troops of the OdVO that, already during the first week of the war, were able to transfer hostilities to enemy territory.

In terms of cover, considerable attention was paid to the possible actions of the enemy on the Danube. The main striking force of the enemy was the Romanian "river division", which included 7 Austro-Hungarian-built monitors with 120-mm artillery, three floating batteries with 152-mm guns, 3 minesweepers with 76-mm guns, 4 minelayers with 47-mm guns. mm artillery and 13 patrol boats with machine guns, based in Galati, Isakchi, Chatal and Periprava.

She was opposed by the Danube River Flotilla under the command of Rear Admiral Abramov, created on June 17, 1940, after Bessarabia became part of the USSR, from part of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet (Black Sea Fleet) and the Dnieper Flotilla.

She had 5 river monitors transferred from the disbanded Dnieper flotilla, of which one was armed with two 130-mm guns (the rest 102-mm) and 22 armored boats (16 of which were transferred from the skerry detachment of the Baltic Fleet), which had one turret from the T tank -28 with a 76-mm gun, 5 minesweepers with machine guns, a detachment of gliders and 18 auxiliary vessels.

The flotilla was based on Izmail, Reni, Kiliya and Vilkovo. Together with the flotilla, the 4th Black Sea detachment of border ships (4th CHOPS) was based under the command of Lieutenant Commander Kubyshkin, which included up to 30 different small-tonnage vessels, including 4 small submarine hunters. Anchorages and bases were covered by a 46-mm separate anti-aircraft artillery division of Captain Shilo and 6 coastal batteries.

Two batteries were stationary and placed in carefully camouflaged covered positions in gun yards. The most powerful of them, the 724th battery, armed with 152-mm howitzers, was located at Reni and had sectors of fire up the Danube to the Romanian military port in Galati, and down to Isaccea.

The 725th battery, which had 130-mm B-13 naval guns, covered Izmail directly. 4 more batteries had fur traction and were mobile. Of these, 2 batteries were armed with 45-mm guns and were anti-boat, and two more had three-inch guns.

From the air, the flotilla was covered by the 96th Separate Fighter Squadron of the Navy assigned to it (96th OIAE) under the command of Captain Korobitsyn, which was armed with 17 I-153 fighters.

Also, an infantry company was assigned to the flotilla, which is sometimes not quite accurately called a company of marines, but according to the documents it was not such, although it performed the functions of this type of troops.

A separate machine-gun company, also assigned to the flotilla and having 22 Maxim machine guns, was intended to guard the 724th battery.

On land, the defense of cover area No. 6 in the area from the Black Sea to Lake Yalug was carried out by the 51st Perekop Rifle Division (51st SD), Major General Tsurulnikov, who had experience in the Finnish war.

To the west of Lake Yalug and higher along the Danube and the Prut River was the 25th Chapaev Rifle Division (25th SD) of Colonel Zakharchenko, which participated in the liberation of Western Ukraine. Both divisions were part of the 14th Rifle Corps (14th SC) of the 9th Separate Army.

The direct cover of the left bank of the Danube was carried out by the 79th Izmail border detachment (79 PO) of Lieutenant Colonel Grachev.

From the very moment of the creation of the Danube Flotilla, its command was clear about the complexity of the operational-tactical configuration of the base site.

From the upper reaches of the Danube there was a threat of actions by a stronger Romanian "river division", from the mouth the flotilla could be blocked by the ships of the Romanian "sea division" based on Sulina. And on top of that, the main base of the flotilla, Izmail, was in the zone of artillery fire from the opposite Romanian coast. There was a real possibility of destruction of the Izmail port by concentrated artillery fire earlier,

than it will be suppressed by the firepower at the disposal of the command of the flotilla and ground forces.

Scheme of the grouping of Soviet troops on the Danube.
The Romanian cape Satul-nou was only half a kilometer from Izmail. IN

good weather on it without binoculars could be seen in the village of Lasker

Katarzhu building of the Romanian border commandant's office. The Romanians easily recorded everything that happened in the port of Izmail, the main base of the Danube flotilla. In the event of war, such a convenient observation sector turned into an equally convenient firing sector.

In the event of the outbreak of hostilities, in order to preserve the base of the flotilla, it became necessary to land troops on the right bank and occupy a fairly extensive bridgehead there, which necessarily included the area opposite Izmail. Then the Izmail port and the city itself would have been spared, at least, from shelling at close range. And the flotilla could deploy further hostilities. Therefore, at the very first meeting with the commander of the flotilla, it was decided to include the corresponding item in the plan of priority actions in case of war, which was being prepared for submission to the district headquarters. Preliminary calculations showed that few troops would be required to capture the bridgehead. On the adjacent section of the right bank, behind a ridge of hills, floodplains began stretching to the Sulinsky Sleeve, capable of serving as a natural defense of the bridgehead, and several battalions could be enough to occupy the minimum necessary positions.

However, Rear Admiral Abramov tried to act in such a sensitive issue as correctly and as collegially as possible. The decision was made with the participation of the commissar of the flotilla, brigade commissar Serebryannikov and the chief of staff of the captain rank Grigoriev.

Grigoriev was entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating the issue with the commander of the 14th SC, Major General Yegorov, in whose operational subordination the flotilla was, and with the command of the OdVO. The admiral himself was in no hurry to come up with proposals for a possible exit to the adjacent territory. Egorov's proposal from the command of the flotilla did not arouse much enthusiasm. And the position taken by him was politically correct no less than the admiral's:

"I can understand how important this is for the flotilla. But where do you order to take these battalions, where to remove them from? In addition, the task assigned to the corps for the defense of Soviet territory does not provide for actions beyond its borders. The last word remained with the command of the district. But it adhered to collegiality in such matters no less than the command of the flotilla. The chief of staff of the district, Major General Zakharov, handed over the proposals to the operators of the headquarters.

And after the required processing, he said:

"Everything is correct, but there can be no talk of this yet."

The commander of the OdVO, Colonel General Cherevichenko, agreed with the opinion of the chief of staff, adding that "... if, with the outbreak of war, the flotilla is able to take such actions on its own, obviously no one will object."

As a result, proposals for landings were not included in the cover plan.

But, despite the fact that the cover plan did not provide for access to enemy territory, it is known that since the beginning of May, units of the 25th SD conducted systematic joint exercises with units of the 51st SD to disembark and parachute from the ships of the Danube military flotilla and to establish crossings over channels to the neighboring Soviet islands.

Apparently, this was due to the fact that in the last pre-war months the possibility of shelling from Romanian territory moved from the realm of assumptions to the category of facts.

So, on June 10, fire was opened on a Soviet steamer from Tataru Island, one passenger was killed, two were wounded.

Romanian reconnaissance groups were repeatedly detained both on the Danube and on Soviet territory. Especially a lot of noise was made by the case of the destruction on June 12 of the Romanian search group, which was trying to take the "language" on Soviet territory.

But the Romanians were also aware of the meaning of the training sessions.

Since June 15, anti-landing measures began to be carried out en masse on the Romanian side - coastal reeds were burned, obscuring the shelling sectors, barbed wire was pulled, trenches were torn off. Sometimes Romanian monitors were trained to go to firing positions to shell the Soviet coast. The situation rapidly heated up on both sides of the border.

On June 17, large detachment exercises of the Black Sea Fleet began, which, due to the tense situation, were held unusually early in 1941 - they usually took place at the end of the summer campaign. At the end of the exercises, the flotilla was ordered to remain in operational readiness No. 2, which provided, in particular, for the dispersal of ships according to the operational deployment plan.

Three monitors, four armored boats and two boat minesweepers went up to the mouth of the Prut, in the Reni area. The Rhenian group of ships was considered by the command as the vanguard of the flotilla - it would immediately come into contact with the river enemy if he appeared from the direction of Galati. The early exit of this group to the designated area had a special meaning: after the start of hostilities, they would have to break through there under the fire of enemy batteries. I will lead the Reni group, the commander of the monitor division, Lieutenant Commander Krinov. The neighboring 724th coastal battery and two artillery regiments of the Chapaev division could interact with his ships.

Two other monitors, including the flagship Udarny, with the bulk of the armored boats and minesweepers, were hidden in the Kislitskaya channel, and the commander of the flotilla directly took control of this group. The rest of the armored boats went to the mouth of the Danube, to the area of Kiliya-nou and Vilkov. Not a single ship remained in Izmail by June 21.

The war begins

(22nd of June)

By 4.00 on June 22, most of the units of the 25th and 51st SD occupied the prepared

engineering defense along the banks of the Danube. The gaps between the formations were covered by the forces of the 79th PO.

On the evening of June 21, all the German barges that were under loading of grain unexpectedly left Izmail and Reni.

At 00.55, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko, the People's Commissar of the Navy Kuznetsov handed over to the commanders of all fleets and flotillas

code number ZN / 87, containing an order for the immediate transition to operational readiness number 1. After that, he contacted the headquarters by phone and warned the operational duty fleets and flotillas about the sent code message.

As he recalled, Headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet Rear Admiral Eliseev:

"I approached the apparatus, and a conversation took place between us approximately in this spirit. The People's Commissar asked if we had received a telegram about the transfer of the fleet to operational readiness No. 1, and added that it should have reached it by now. I replied that we did not yet have telegrams and the fleet was in operational readiness No. 2. Then he said that we must act without delay. I reported that the transfer of the fleet to operational readiness No. 1 raises no doubts.

At 01:03, the communication center of the Black Sea Fleet Headquarters received a ciphergram:

"To the military councils of the Northern Fleet, KBF, Black Sea Fleet, PVF, Far Eastern Fleet. Operational readiness number one immediately. Kuznetsov.

With the receipt of this coded message, on the orders of the chief of staff of the fleet, a package was opened containing secret documents defining the actions of the operational service during the transition to the highest degree of readiness.

Operational readiness No. 1 was announced by the Black Sea Fleet at 01:15 AM.

Shortly after the announcement of operational readiness No. 1 The commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral Oktyabrsky, and a member of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet, divisional commissar Kulakov, arrived at the fleet headquarters. With the announcement of the highest degree of operational readiness, a pre-tested warning system was immediately put into operation.

At about 01:50 a.m., the People's Commissar of the Navy sent a cipher message to the Military Councils of the Fleets and the Flotilla Commanders as follows:

"During 22.6-23.6, a sudden attack by the Germans is possible. The German attack may start with provocative actions. Our task is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. At the same time, the fleets and flotillas should be in full combat readiness to meet a possible attack by the Germans or their allies. I order, having switched to operational readiness No. 1, carefully mask the increase in combat readiness. I categorically forbid reconnaissance in foreign territorial waters. No other events will be held without special orders.

15 minutes after the issuance of the above-mentioned order, the People's Commissar of the Navy gave an emergency cipher message stating that the situation was given "only for the information of military councils."

At 02:00 on June 22, the Danube Flotilla switched to operational readiness No. 1.

The commander of the flotilla, Rear Admiral Abramov, ordered to disperse and camouflage the ships and to alert units and units.

Communication was switched to the flagship command post (FKP), which was deployed in advance in a shelter on the territory not exposed to fire from the Romanian coast. At about 4 o'clock, the prearranged signal "Hurricane" came to the FKP, which meant that the units of the Black Sea Fleet had begun hostilities.

At 0415, the Romanian batteries opened fire on the Soviet side - Reni, Kartal, Izmail, Kiliya, Vilkovo and on the ships of the flotilla. Two minutes into action were

all enemy batteries known from preliminary reconnaissance data have been introduced. Izmail was also fired upon by two monitors, which left the Sulinsky branch in the Kiliya, but did not descend down it.

At 4.20, without asking the higher authorities, having assessed the criticality of the situation, Rear Admiral Abramov independently gave the order to return fire and report on the actions of the flotilla to the Military Council of the Fleet. After the introduction of naval artillery and artillery cover, the shelling from the Romanian coast weakened somewhat. But the enemy's heavy artillery, which fired from closed positions, did not stop firing, although it was forced to switch to counter-battery combat with the flotilla's coastal batteries and monitor artillery.

Artillery duel, now flaring up, then fading, lasted several hours. By noon, the enemy artillery switched to constant harassing fire, which there was nothing to systematically suppress, since the supply of ammunition was carried out from the Black Sea and now had to pass by the Romanian stronghold near the village of Periprava with three batteries that were shooting through the entire reach.

During the artillery raid, the flotilla and coastal batteries did not suffer significant losses, but the Izmail port was completely disabled.

Romanian soldiers are preparing to land on the left bank.

On the morning of June 22, 1941, eight Romanian biplanes [AB-37 from E3s.18 Vot, raided Izmail.

Information about this raid is rather contradictory.

According to the Romanian version, 1AK-37 sergeant Ion Constantinescu was lost from anti-aircraft fire, and adjutant Konstantin Macri was injured, but still managed to make an emergency landing.

According to the Soviet version, the 96th OIAE shot down three planes, and one car was shot down by the 463rd anti-aircraft battery st. Lieutenant Hunt.

There were no more air raids that day - the main blows at dawn and on the morning of June 22 were delivered by the Romanian aviation on Bolgrad, where the headquarters of the 14th SC was located.

The ships of the flotilla stationed in Reni were forced to withdraw from the Reni raid downstream to the mouth of the river. Viketa, since the raid was visible from the Romanian side and the enemy had the opportunity to conduct aimed fire at the ships. Return fire of the Soviet naval, coastal and army

artillery forced the enemy to stop firing. During the day, the shooting resumed several times. Below Izmail, in the Kiliya-nova sector, covered by the 23rd Infantry Regiment (23rd Rifle Regiment), at about 0900, the Romanians made the largest attempt to land on the left bank of the Danube. The area of the town of Kiliya-nova was one of the most convenient places for landing troops on the left bank.

The command of the 23rd regiment, being aware of this, in the last pre-war days took all measures to repel a possible surprise attack.

In early June, the regiment was withdrawn from the former grain warehouses on Bolshaya Dunayskaya Street, which housed its barracks, to summer camps. But the regiment commander, Captain Sirota, sometimes erroneously called a major in research (he had already been promoted to the rank of major, but did not manage to get it during the landing operation), considered these measures inappropriate for the current situation.

Fearing a sudden artillery attack on the summer camp (which was only 2 km from the military camp and also within range of the Romanian artillery) and the subsequent landing of the enemy, Sirota managed to take measures against both.

On the very bank of the Danube, beyond the eastern outskirts of Kiliya-nova, an earthen dam passed, protecting the city from spring floods. Trenches were dug on the dam for two battalions of the regiment and positions were equipped for the 91st anti-tank battalion. Behind them, in the second echelon, the third battalion dug in, and even further, near the Chabanskies Krinitsy farm, the positions of regimental artillery were located.

Sirota deployed the entire regiment directly to combat positions, daily delegating a company on duty to the summer camp to demonstrate the presence of the regiment. Realizing the vulnerability of the position, the first echelon of which was located directly along the coast, Sirota, in addition to being hidden at the occupied line, conducted a series of battalion exercises at the training ground, where barrage, dagger and flanking fire from all types of weapons were practiced. The battle order of the regiment was about one and a half kilometers along the front, while the width of the Danube in this place did not exceed a kilometer, that is, it was within reach even of the battalion mortars of the parties.

At the beginning of the fourth morning, the first concentrated artillery attack was launched precisely at the summer camp of the regiment, where, as it was later calculated, about 200 empty tents were pitched.

Then the fire was transferred to the barracks of the regiment and the port, where the power plant and the sawmill were destroyed.

The dam and the troops who had taken cover behind it were fired without aiming at about 6.00. Sirota ordered not to answer the fire and not to get involved in an artillery duel.

After the shelling from the Romanian coast, covered with thick fog, the clanging of iron and the noise of ship engines began to be heard.

At 9 o'clock in the morning on the fairway, despite heavy fog, 2 motor launches were timely detected, moving obliquely, from top to bottom, followed by scows, kayuks and several dozen boats.

Having passed the fairway and entered the mouth, where the current was weaker, the enemy ships sharply increased their speed. At the same time, artillery preparation began, and now the blow was delivered directly to the dam, followed by the transfer of shelling deep into the possible line of defense. And again the order was given to fire

reply.

The regiment's firepower would not have been enough to simultaneously repulse the landing force and fight enemy artillery.

Having allowed the enemy to reach the distance worked out in advance during the exercises, the infantry subunits of the battalions fired a general volley on command, supported by the fire of light machine guns and the regimental machine gun company. Battalion mortars and an anti-tank division fired quickly. Anti-tank guns fired combined armor-piercing and fragmentation shells. Both launches lost their course, gave a noticeable draft and were carried downstream. Several boats were destroyed. Scows and kayuks, turning around, returned to their shore.

Boats with Romanian troops under fire.

After the withdrawal of the landing force, the enemy resumed shelling, but could not suppress the regiment's firepower.

By 10:30 the fight was over. During this time, a full ammunition load was used up, which greatly exceeded the established norms. But the enemy did not make repeated attacks, and the shell hunger was not yet felt.

On the sections of both blown up (back in 1940, during the withdrawal of the Romanian troops) bridges - on the Danube and the Prut, the enemy also attempted to land troops. In both cases, the landing forces were small in number and consisted of several boats towed by two or three boats. They were repulsed by the forces of the frontier posts.

In total, on June 22, the joint efforts of the army units, border guards and the flotilla repelled six enemy attempts to cross the Danube: in the Kartal, Razdelny area, three at Kilii-nov (the next two were carried out at nightfall by insignificant forces and were more of the nature of reconnaissance in combat of certain areas), two - at Vilkov and four attempts to ford the Prut near Reni.

Landing on Satul-know

(June 23-25)

The harassing fire on Izmail was carried out throughout the day, and there was a threat that the enemy would sooner or later set up camouflaged ship anchorages and cover them with his artillery.

The ships and coastal batteries of the flotilla, conducting counter-battery combat, fired more than 1,600 shells of large and medium caliber per day. This could not continue for a long time, because due to the shelling of the reach near Periprava by the enemy, problems began to emerge with supplies.

Rear Admiral Abramov decided to return to the pre-war landing plans, which were developed just for such a case.

The landing force had to be landed on the nearby cape Satul-know. So far, not very much enemy artillery was stationed there, but it fired continuously and made it impossible to restore the work of the port and all the basic services of the flotilla.

The short distance to Izmail, in principle, allowed even machine-gun and mortar fire to be fired at the city and the base of the fleet, but Satul-nou presented the main threat as an ideal position for adjusting the fire of heavy batteries located in the Tulcea area. As a result, from a distance of about 20 km, the enemy fired quite effectively at parts of the 51st SD, at the fairway, the port, and even at the area of the position of the main forces of the flotilla in the Kislitskaya channel.

In this regard, the chief of staff of the flotilla, Grigoriev, arrived at the CL of the 14th SC, with which communication was interrupted, and suggested that commander Yegorov allocate at least a battalion to organize the landing. Yegorov approved the idea of landing in principle, but refused to assign a battalion, apparently, given Directive No. 2 given to the districts at 7.15 in the morning:

"TO THE MILITARY COUNCILS OF LVO, PribOVO, ZAPOVO, KOVO, OdVO

Copy: TO THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER OF THE NAVY

On June 22, 1941, at 04:00 in the morning, German aviation, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities along the western border and bombarded them.

At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire in different places and crossed our border.

In connection with the unheard-of impudence attack by Germany on the Soviet Union

I order:

1. Troops to attack enemy forces with all their strength and means and destroy them in areas where they have violated the Soviet border.

From now on, until further notice, ground troops will not cross the border.

2. Reconnaissance and combat aviation to establish the places of concentration of enemy aviation and the grouping of its ground forces.

Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb the main groupings of his ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and ground attack aircraft.

Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100-150 km. Bomb Koenigsberg and Memel.

Do not raid the territory of Finland and Romania until special instructions.

TIMOSHENKO,
MALENKOV,

ZHUKOV 22.6.41, 7.15"

Showing the map, he said that a threatened

situation, the enemy, according to intelligence, is pulling troops there, and added that the corps might have to transfer some forces to the right flank.

Without returning to the FKP, Grigoriev went to the headquarters of the 79th PO.

It was easier to negotiate with the border guards, especially after the 4th CHOPS was transferred to the operational subordination of the flotilla in the morning.

The commander of the detachment, Lieutenant Colonel Grachev, said only: "I have 200 fighters, who else will participate in this business?"

Grigoriev assured him that the sailors would also go to the landing, in addition, the flotilla would organize cover and support. After which Grachev decided:

"- If you decide to act, I will give people. Lieutenant Bodrunov will be in command."

In the evening at the FKP, the command of the flotilla discussed the current situation. There were clearly not enough people for the landing.

Abramov requested information from hydrographers on the state of the water level.

The rise of the water level in the middle of summer is a characteristic feature of the Danube. It is caused by the intense melting of the alpine glaciers that feed the sources of the river at this time. The summer flood was just gaining strength - and this was a very significant factor for the operation.

Behind the edge of the right bank of the Kiliya branch, extensive floodplains stretched towards the Sulinsky. The flood turned them into a swampy lake, and an elevated strip of coast with several settlements from Cape Satul-nou to Kiliya-veke became something like a long, narrow island or even a ridge of islands (the solid coast was no longer continuous), stretching for tens of kilometers .

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Monitors on the Danube. In the foreground "Shock", behind him "Zheleznnyakov".

Under such conditions, the Romanians could hardly quickly bring up large reinforcements. And the forces covering Satul-nou were not too large: according to intelligence, there was an artillery battery, about 200 infantrymen and border guards of the local outpost. 2 platoons covered directly the fire adjustment point. After weighing all the circumstances, the commander of the flotilla made the final decision: to carry out the landing with the forces that are,

The detachment of border guards, which formed the basis of the landing, was given - as a group of the first throw - a platoon of Lieutenant Koshchei from the assigned infantry company flotilla. Four armored boats were allocated for the landing, for artillery preparation and support of the landing - the Udarny and Martynov monitors stationed in the Kislitskaya channel, coastal battery No. 725 and two batteries of the anti-aircraft division. The landing was scheduled for the night of June 24th.

The Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet was informed about the planned operation at 22.30. And about an hour later, at 23.35 on June 22, the go-ahead for the operation was received.

All daylight hours on June 23, preliminary artillery preparation was carried out. Without showing that special attention was being paid to this area, transferring fire here from other targets and returning to them again, the Udarny and Martynov monitors and the 725th battery in several stages subjected Cape Satul-nou to concentrated shelling with the expectation of suppressing fire points near the water's edge.

The tactical position of the flotilla was still difficult.

At any moment, the enemy could bring out two monitors hiding in the Sulinsky arm to intercept the landing, and move a river division down from Galati. It was decided to make pre-emptive mine setting.

But the flotilla had a little more than a hundred mines (some of the Rybka type, which were used on the rivers back in the Civil War, and some were the new R-1s with a more powerful charge).

On the barrier, which was planned to cross the Danube in the most threatened direction, on the outskirts of Galati, the commander allowed to spend up to a quarter of the available stock. But the width of the navigable fairway in that area reached two hundred meters, and it was obvious that with the density of the barrier that could be created, the mine danger to the enemy would not be so great.

great.

Mines of the R-1 type placed in torpedo chutes.

The flagship miner of the flotilla, Captain-Lieutenant Issarev, proposed abandoning the setting of a defensive barrier, and setting up only a few small minefields in the form of active barriers on the route of the enemy ships from their anchorages to Izmail.

Issarev suggested laying mines openly:

"Let the enemy see how the mines are laid. How much we bet, he will not be able to count. And our gunners will interfere with trawling.

The commander approved this decision. It was decided to lay mines not at night, but at dawn, so that enemy observation posts could not only distinguish our ships, but also figure out what they were doing.

In fact, the mine setting was of a demonstrative nature, but in the event of the start of trawling attempts, it should have all the elements that make one assume a serious minefield: 2-3 small mine banks, a mine line and a strip. Considering that over time the demonstration nature of the barrier will still be discovered, it was decided to put it up simultaneously with the landing.

The flotilla did not have regular minelayers.

To set up the barrier, 4 armored boats from the Reni group under the command of Art. Lieutenant Shulik.

In fact, armored boats are not designed for mine setting. The idea to adapt them for dropping mines on the move, equipping body kits and folding slopes, was proposed and implemented through the efforts of the flagship Issarev and the head of the technical department, engineer-captain 3rd rank Munaev. Armored boats took on board 24 mines.

Assuming that there could be enemy agents in the city who were watching the preparations for the combat mission, the mines were loaded onto boats before dark.

With the onset of darkness, direct preparations for the landing began. Taking advantage of the darkness, two guns from one of the batteries of the 46th anti-aircraft artillery division under the command of Lieutenant Kashinin were transported to the port of Izmail, where they were set on direct fire and camouflaged.

Rear Admiral Abramov moved the observation post (OP) of the flotilla command to the OP of the 725th battery. From there, Colonel Prosyantov controlled coastal defense firepower.

At night, a detachment of Rhenian armored boats left Izmail, climbed up the Danube to Romanian territory to the mouth of the small Pisica river, where they approached the shore and stopped. Shortly before dawn, the boats again entered the fairway and for some time drifted with the engines turned off. When the vague outlines of the opposite shore appeared in the darkness, the first mines were dropped. Above the quiet river there were several splashes, clearly audible from afar. As expected, enemy observers noticed the boats and the Romanians opened fire, first with machine guns, and then with mortars and guns. In response, the 724th battery and 3 monitors of the Reni group, allocated for fire cover, opened fire. Having dropped the last mines, the armored boats, developing at full speed, went to the Soviet coast and left the firing zone. One armored boat, which was damaged, was taken in tow during the withdrawal.

The landing force was loaded onto armored boats in the Kislitskaya channel. There, in addition to the previously allocated four armored boats, another one was added. The first wave of troops was loaded onto the armored boats. The second wave was supposed to advance on 12 skiffs directly from the port of Izmail, after the landing of the first and the capture of the coastline.

The first wave included a platoon attached to the flotilla of the company Art. Lieutenant Kizelbashev under the command of Lieutenant Koshchei and about a hundred border guards of the 79th PO under the command of Lieutenant Bodrunov. About the same number of border guards made up the second wave.

The landing was scheduled for 2.50, when it was just beginning to get light and the armored boats were not yet very noticeable from afar, and it was already easier for the paratroopers to navigate on an unfamiliar coast. The boats took about 20 minutes to cross. This time was devoted to artillery preparation.

At dawn, coastal defense battery No. 725 and two batteries of the 46th anti-aircraft artillery battalion, the Udarny and Martynov monitors opened fire on enemy fortifications on the peninsula.

The guns of Lieutenant Kashinin, firing at direct fire, destroyed the observation tower used to adjust the fire with armor-piercing shells.

The enemy responded immediately. Long-range guns from Tulcea opened fire on Ishmael. Shooting also rose on Satul-nou. But barrage fire did not stand in the way of the boats - they have not yet been seen from the Romanian coast. Approaching Izmail, the armored boats developed the maximum speed and broke through the insufficiently strong barrage opened upon their detection without loss. The schedule was fully respected. At 2.45, on command from the OP of the 724th battery, which fixed the approach of the boats, the cover artillery fire was transferred to

depth of the Romanian defense. The boats themselves opened fire from cannons and machine guns along the shore. At 2.50 paratroopers began to land in shallow coastal water. This moment initially caused some concern, since it was not possible to carry out additional reconnaissance of the coast and there was no certainty that mines and hidden wire fences would not meet the paratroopers along the water's edge.

However, the landing on the cape was a complete surprise for the Romanians, and there were no barriers on the shore.

The fight was not particularly fierce. Romanian soldiers quickly rolled back into the marshes. There were almost no hand-to-hand fights, and few grenades were used up. Half an hour later, the fighting on the peninsula stopped. About 70 Romanian soldiers and border guards surrendered. About 10 heavy and light machine guns and two 3-inch Russian cannons with stamps "1878 St. Petersburg, Obukhov plant" were captured. In principle, there should have been more guns, since Colonel Prosyanyov, who had been spotting firing points on the cape for two days, recorded that "at least four medium-caliber guns" fired. It was decided that the Romanians managed to drown a couple of guns ...

The landing party suffered almost no losses: neither among the sailors, nor among the border guards was not a single one killed.

An hour after the end of the battle, a naval NP was deployed on the cape, from where it was reported to the headquarters of the 14th SC that the landing force had been landed and secured. Komkor Egorov congratulated on the victory and, of course, did not stop there. Yegorov was interested in the possibility of expanding the bridgehead, especially along the front - it was in this form that information was fed up.

It was decided to allocate a battalion of the 287th Rifle Regiment (287th Rifle Regiment) of the 51st SD, which was holding the defense near Izmail, to reinforce the landing.

The landing of the battalion was scheduled for the 25th, but for now the captured cape was visited for reconnaissance by the commander of the 287th joint venture, Major Sultan-Galiev. In the interests of the battalion, a SNiS post was equipped on the peninsula and a telephone cable was extended from Izmail.

Having reported to the authorities, the wounded, prisoners and trophies were taken from the peninsula. The border guards were also removed. The sailors, on the contrary, were reinforced to half a company, which was supposed to guard a small bridgehead until the arrival of the battalion. The half-company was housed in the guard houses of the broken correction tower. The buildings of the Romanian frontier post on the western coast of the cape were neither occupied nor destroyed, they were not even posted a post near them. Combat guards were rare - our boats were already freely navigating the Danube in this area, and Ishmael was nearby, only half a kilometer away.

In the evening, both Romanian monitors and minesweepers with motor scows (the exact number of which, of course, remained unknown) quietly climbed out of Tulcea to the Danube along the Sulina branch, crept up to the shore at low speed in the thickening twilight, quietly landed troops and, without firing a single shot, in the darkness of the night, just as quietly departed home, not noticed by patrol boats of the 4th CHOPS.

The Romanian assault unit is deployed in battle formation.

The Romanians deployed in battle formation (the total number of them also remained unclear, but obviously not less than a company) and before dawn crept up to the outposts. It was destroyed in one throw, but someone managed to do it anyway.

launch a flare.

The fighters of the half-company, sleeping in the houses, managed to jump up at the last moment and open fire.

They did not hold the houses, but were able, avoiding destruction and capture, to retreat to the eastern coast of the cape. There, opposite Ishmael, in a dry place near the clearing, behind the Erik crossing the cape, they took up defense and were able to dig in. The sounds of the night battle were heard in Izmail, rockets were seen taking off from there. The battalion, destined for landing, was alerted, since it was already at the landing craft, and the first company began to hastily load onto the Udarny and Martynov monitors. The second half-company of infantry assigned to the flotilla

occupied armored boats. Border guard mangroups reacted the fastest and moved to the battlefield on their patrol boats.

The smallest of them, having on board only 5 team members with one "Maxim" and 4 border guards with two light machine guns, quickly crossed the fairway and moved to Satul-nou in the dark, focusing on the flashes of shots.

Three border guards and a lieutenant jumped into the water on the move, finding themselves behind enemy infantry lines, on its left flank. The noise of the battle prevented the Romanians from seeing the boat behind them in time. But, having fallen under crossfire, they did not run, but began to shoot back, concentrating fire on the most dangerous target - a boat with an easel machine gun. The crew of the boat was destroyed almost immediately.

The jumping border guards managed to survive and hold out until the approach of the Udarny monitor, which landed infantry and opened fire from all guns and machine guns.

The Zheleznyakov monitor approached less successfully, coming under heavy machine gun fire, dragged by the Romanians right on the shore and found itself in the dead zone for the monitor's 102-mm guns. The infantry on board suffered significant losses. In the end, some lieutenant managed to hit the machine gun with a grenade right from the side.

Light armored boat type "D". Its weak point was weak armor. Unlike yesterday, the second battle for the cape was marked by extreme bitterness and was accompanied by heavy losses. Well-trained Romanian marines from the 17th Marine Battalion, trained by German instructors who were in the battalion and during the battle, participated in the landing. However, the Romanians could not oppose anything to the powerful weapons and strong armor of the monitors. Their anti-tank rifles pierced the turrets of armored boats with 20-mm armor at a short combat distance, but were powerless against monitors. After the introduction of both monitors into battle, the enemy began to retreat deep into the cape, where he entrenched himself in the buildings of the former frontier post, inaccessible to direct shelling by ships.

After that, the armored boats and monitors returned to the left bank behind the second company of the battalion.

The names of the four border guard heroes remained unknown even to their immediate superiors. After going on the offensive, they were the first to advance behind the retreating enemy into the depths of the peninsula, where their traces were lost. The second border boat approached the shore 300 meters to the right of the first.

Lieutenant Gordievsky, the fighters Ivanenko, Blagoverov and others who were on it saw the heroes, but could not identify them at such a distance.

The Romanians who had settled in the building of the frontier post without the support of the flotilla were knocked out of there for more than two hours. In the end, they retreated through the floodplains into the depths of Romanian territory. Several seriously wounded were captured. Including a Romanian border guard captain who acted as a guide.

The case received an unexpected (then, obviously, it did not seem so) continuation. The captain, who ended up in the hospital with a shrapnel wound to the abdomen, was interrogated not only by the army authorities, but also by the NKVD administration and the leadership of the border detachment. Then he declared:

"I know by surname the entire command staff of the border detachment, even the commanders of mangroups and outposts."

As it turned out, he received information from a resident of Ishmael, who lived in the house closest to the border barracks. During the interrogation, which was personally conducted by the commander of the 79th PO Grachev, the enemy agent admitted that he had carried out the tasks of the Romanian and German intelligence ...

After a short meeting, the army and navy commanders decided not to focus on some delicacy of the situation, from which certain conclusions would have to be drawn, but to consider the morning battle the beginning of an operation to expand the bridgehead. As a result, the battalion, fairly bled from the morning battle, with the support of sailors and border guards, started a new battle. Now for the expansion of the foothold down the Danube. However, the expansion was rather slow. The battalion moved exclusively along the coast, the armored boats did not lag behind a single step, having the order "to remain under the right bank, continuously supporting the battalion." The enemy, which was the Romanian pickets and observation posts, not so much resisted as retreated after 2-3 shells received from the water. For the speed of the offensive, it was decided not to force the swampy areas not occupied by the enemy, but to overcome them, transporting infantry on armored boats. Gradually, the infantry began to land on the shore only when the enemy was detected.

Border guards on their own boats occupied and checked all the large and small islands in the direction of the battalion. According to this method, the islands of Stepovoi, large and small Daller and the village of Pardina were occupied. By evening, the size of the bridgehead along the front was 40 kilometers.

By the end of the day on the Danube, in essence, a new operational situation began to take shape, more favorable for the Soviet side. Ishmael was no longer fired accurately, and the fire of long-range batteries from Tulcea was ineffective without adjustment. The naval base is up and running again. The middle section of the border Kiliysky arm was completely taken under control, and navigation on it, in general, was free, since Romanian aviation did not have air supremacy and could not deliver sensitive strikes on ships. But in the hands of the enemy was still a significant

the section of the right bank from Chilia-veke to the mouth, on which there were two large strongholds: Chilia-veke itself and Periprava. While these points were in the hands of the enemy, all the barges with cargo going to the Izmail section from Odessa were fired upon by the Romanians and suffered significant losses, and the flotilla could not freely use the mouth of the Danube. Having a strong garrison in the Kiliya-veka, the Romanians could at any moment strike at the flank of the bridgehead.

It was necessary to further reduce this section, and then completely eliminate it.

Kiliya operation

(June 24-26)

On the evening of June 24, the FKP was already discussing a plan for a new landing - on Kiliya-Vek, with the aim of expanding the bridgehead at the expense of its left, threatened flank.

"- Landing should be no later than the morning of the twenty-sixth. And the regiment should land. This is not much to capture Kiliya Staraya!" Abramov summed up the results of the discussion of plans for a new landing.

Further, the question, of course, had to be agreed with Yegorov.

But this time the commander was much more optimistic. He reported that the situation on the right flank of the corps had improved. And the fact that on the Danube sector it was possible to transfer hostilities to enemy territory, Yegorov highly appreciated, considering this important for his entire line of defense. It turned out that he had already discussed with the staff commanders how to strengthen the landing, and it was precisely about the regiment. There was no need to ask or convince. The corps commander was strongly occupied with the prospect of doubling the size of the occupied bridgehead. Questions about the fact that the bridgehead on the right bank has little operational purpose, does not have prospects for expanding in depth and even accessing the left bank of the Sulina branch located behind it, will not change the operational situation (since the Romanians have free access to the Black Sea in this case, there will be one more girl - Georgievskoe), somehow they were not discussed ...

The 23rd joint venture of Captain Sirota was assigned to the landing. To support the landing, in addition to the coastal battery No. 65, which stood at Vilkov, and two monitors, which, remaining in the canal, under the cover of the islands, moved to new firing positions, the 99th howitzer artillery regiment (99 GAP) of the 51st was transferred from Tatarbunar SD. The paratroopers were to be landed by 14 ships of the Kiliysko Vilkovskaya group - armored boats and former border boats - Lieutenant Commander Kubyshev, who was appointed commander of the landing.

For the first throw, Captain Sirota chose the best battalion, with which he himself went. The battalion was again given a platoon of marines. It was decided to land directly at Kiliya Veke in order to immediately tie up the garrison of the enemy's main stronghold. And from there, some units had to quickly move down to the mouth, others - up, to connect with the battalion of the 287th SP.

The order of Divisional Commander Tsurulnikov to cross the Danube, issued on the same evening, was purely general and did not contain any decisions for the operation:

"The operation to cross the Danube in order to capture the enemy Kiliya-Veka and destroy the enemy's fortified area there begins on June 26, 1941 at two o'clock

midnight. The landing commander is Captain Sirota, Lieutenant Commander Kubyshev is responsible for the landing of troops. Fire support is assigned to the regimental artillery of Captain Otyanov, to the coastal battery No. 65 and the artillery division of Captain Voloshin.

It was necessary to detail the battle order of the units and develop the landing sequence by the beginning. of the headquarters of the 23rd joint venture to captain Poplavsky and the commander of the armored boat division, captain-lieutenant Kubyshev,

appointed after the accession of the 4th CHOPS to the flotilla as the commander of the Kiliysko Vilkovskaya group of ships.

Kubyshkin, of course, was most worried about the number of ships allocated for the landing.

Border secret covering the coast.

He managed to include, in addition to the assigned one, the small hunter "SK-125" in the landing group, which was allocated from the Akkerman division of small hunters on June 17 to be delivered to Kiliya-nova from the Dniester Estuary by Rear Admiral Vorobyov. Having made a reconnaissance of the Soviet part of the Danube Delta on June 18-19, Rear Admiral left for Odessa by land, and the small hunter remained attached to the flotilla.

But even with the SK-125, all the vessels allocated for the operation could transfer no more than two companies of infantry in one flight, which could well have been thrown off the coast before the arrival of the second landing party. Kubyshkin suggested, as in the landing on Satul-nou, to transfer even before the company of infantry in kayuks. Poplavsky found this risky.

The regimental commander Sirota, being a very cautious and prudent commander, did not take the position of either side:

"Enough, comrades. Time does not endure, an order is an order. This is not a parliament, but a military headquarters ... Take orders from Lieutenant Ovcharov and proceed to their exact implementation. All staff members should be in place, do not leave.

After that, Sirota came to the conclusion about the need for additional reconnaissance of the situation in the landing area.

On the night of June 25, it was decided to conduct a preliminary search for scouts. However, neither the flotilla nor the border guards, of course, had special reconnaissance units capable of performing such a task, and the army scouts did not know the area on the adjacent side.

The organization of the search was entrusted to the head of the Kiliya border commandant's office, Major Burmistrov. The search was to be carried out at night, on terrain with difficult terrain. Therefore, a group was formed that was not quite usual in composition. It included a sergeant of the border troops, a conscript Yermolin, who had extensive experience in detaining border violators, a local poacher Gadiyak, who served as a guide ... and a local bandit Kravchenko.

Pavel Kravchenko was a native of the town of Kiliya-veke, neighboring Izmail, which remained after Bessarabia joined the USSR on Romanian territory. He raided the houses of fishermen and kulaks, state offices and storehouses, and passing merchants on the only road among the Danube floodplains connecting Kiliya-Veka with Sulina. In 1938, he shot dead the head of the Siguranza Chilia nou, Mihai Menescu. Three months before the war, being tightly surrounded by the Romanian police, he took refuge on one of the remote islands, Salmanka, and then went over to the Soviet side, meeting with complete sympathy and understanding. He was a well-known personality from articles in the Romanian border newspapers, and therefore, without any problems with the NKVD (they checked him for only a week), he settled on Soviet territory. And not without a small incident. The former haiduk felt so confident in Soviet Bessarabia that he refused the job offered to him at the fish farm, agreeing only to work in the city

kommunhoze Kiliya-nou.

After midnight, the group rolled off in a kayak from the Soviet island of Stepovoy, closest to Kiliya-nou, where the small hunter SK-125, Lieutenant Timoshenko, who had delivered it there and served as a cover, remained waiting, and secretly reached the Romanian island of Tataru (Ivanesti). On the island, scouts discovered a telephone cable going under water to the Romanian coast. Moving along the cable, the group found an observation post, with a communication center of two soldiers and an officer. The scouts managed to capture all three of them, after which, after destroying the switchboard and cutting out twenty meters of cable with a dagger, they retreated to SK-125.

The prisoners testified that the cable was pulled to Tulcea to correct heavy artillery fire. The officer reported that the enemy was pulling up the marine battalions assigned to the river division to the combat area, intending to resume landing attempts with the support of monitors. The Kiliya-veke garrison was reinforced by one of these battalions, the 15th, as well as an artillery battalion of medium-caliber guns, sappers and a machine-gun company. There are German instructors in the river division and in the battalions.

The next day, the units of the regiment managed to conduct training (in the lower reaches of the Danube, a suitable place was found for this, hidden from the enemy). The battalion of the first throw made a training landing on the boats.

Each of the armored boats and frontier boats participating in the landing was additionally armed with two heavy machine guns and was issued tapes with tracer bullets for all machine guns, since the flotilla reserves so far allowed this.

The monitors were loaded with additional ammunition for large-caliber guns.

Near Izmail, positions were hastily equipped for another long-range battery - the 726th.

Her 122-mm guns, delivered by barges from Odessa, immediately after the capture of Satul Nou, could hit 20 km, but by the time of the landing, the firing positions had not been equipped, and the installation of the guns was not completed.

9 SB from the 78th UAE, Major Baderbenkov, took off from the Nikolaev airfield and at 04.48, unexpectedly for the enemy, dropped 70 FAB-100s into the Kiliya-veke area. One of the bombs in the river port sank a barge. The Romanians were taken by surprise, and the Soviet group returned to their airfield without loss. During the day fire raids were carried out by the monitors and batteries of the howitzer regiment.

The bridgehead, captured on June 24, held out confidently, all day long it was fired upon by long-range artillery from Tulcea and small arms fire from the floodplains, but the enemy did not attempt to recapture it ..

In the evening, the second secretary of the Novo-Kiliya City Party Committee, who was also the commander of the local fighter battalion, arrived at the command post of the 23rd joint venture, and offered to include his fighters in the landing. Poplavsky rashly approved this idea, but Sirota put everything in its place in time:

"We can't even take all our trained and fired fighters. And let your "hawks" vigilantly guard important objects, our rear from saboteurs and enemy paratroopers.

During the day, "SK-125", lowering the masts below the reeds, walked along the sleeves, eriks and nearby channels, finding out if the Romanians secretly transferred them

monitors or boats.

It was decided on the night of June 26 to carry out a second minelaying in order to block the Sulina arm and prevent the possible rise of two monitors settling in Sulina along it.

In the evening, a dense fog fell on the river, and the Romanians stopped shelling earlier than usual.

On the last evening, Sirota decided to change the composition of the first wave of landing. Now it included only one rifle 3rd company of Lieutenant Yurkovsky, which was reinforced by two platoons of the regimental machine-gun company of Lieutenant Stadnik, a mortar platoon and two "forty-fives" with full crews. This choice was not accidental.

Lieutenant Yurkovsky, who was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1940, had experience in combat operations in difficult conditions, in isolation from the main forces. Then, while still a junior lieutenant and commanding a platoon during the assault on the Mannerheim line in the area of st. Tali, he, being cut off by fire from the main forces, destroyed the fortified pillbox. After that, he lost his orientation on the ground in a snowstorm, but two days later he was able to go beyond the front line with the fighters.

Immediately after this decision was made, Yurkovski had a conflict with the regimental commander Sirota. From the moment the far-sighted and cautious Sirota placed the regiment in the trenches, 3 weeks have already passed, the last four days of which the fighters were under constant fire.

Upon learning of the appointment of the company in the 1st wave of landing, Yurkovskiy demanded permission to withdraw his fighters from the trenches on the dam to the barracks partially destroyed by bombs on Bolshaya Dunayskaya Street:

"The soldiers must be properly fed and given four hours of rest!"

The cautious Sirota hesitated, knowing that the barracks were located not far from the port, which was periodically shelled:

"And if the barracks are shelled again? The operation will fail."

Yurkovski began to prove that the enemy would hardly repeat an artillery attack in the dead of night and in heavy fog. In the end, Sirota agreed.

Around the same time, Kubyshkin finally convinced Poplavsky that he still had to take the risk and send skiffs after the first wave in order to somehow strengthen the 3rd company.

After that, by combined efforts, they managed to persuade Sirota to change the plan of the operation once again. It was decided to further strengthen Yurkovskiy's company with the commandant half-company of Lieutenant Kletkin, a platoon of Lieutenant Mustafa's assigned company and a detachment of border guards, who were to be transported by 12 kayuks provided by the Zavety Ilyich fish farm.

The second wave was to consist of two rifle companies and two machine gun platoons from Stadnik's company.

Yurkovski took the upcoming operation extremely seriously and prepared with the utmost care. The conversation that took place during preparations for the landing between the first assistant chief of staff (PNSH-1) of the 23rd regiment, Lieutenant Ovcharov, and the commander of one of the company's departments is indicative.

Yurkovsky Sabur Kurbatov:

"And you, comrade sergeant, why are you not sleeping? And you should rest. After all, they didn't come to the fair!

"Mina can't sleep, comrade lieutenant!" I am the squad leader. You have to think hard before the fight. It is necessary to catch a mistake, watch all the rifle, boot and footcloth. Dirt, dirka - bad! Now repaired - tomorrow too late.

With the onset of darkness, eleven boats assigned to the landing party, secretly moored at the piers on the western outskirts of Chilia-nou. A little further downstream, a dozen skiffs were tucked up at the elevator. The rowers were collective farm fishermen.

Lieutenant Yurkovsky, having placed a company, went to the elevator and began to interrogate the rowers. He was interested in only one question:

"Which of you served in the Romanian army and was retrained in the Red Army?"

There were several such people. With their help, Yurkovskiy drew up a plan for Kiliya-Veka, trying to make it as adequate as possible in a military context.

respect.

Among the fishermen, by questioning, he also sought out Samson Harlanin, who had lived in Kiliya-vek for 4 years, and sent him to the 1st platoon of Lieutenant Shvets, in which he was going to be himself, as a guide.

But even this seemed insufficient to him.

Yurkovski went to the dam and from there, on a boat, for two hours he tried with binoculars to clarify the plan of the city, marking at least the highest buildings on it, which could have the most dangerous firing points. Of the most important buildings in the city, he singled out the building of the "captain of the port", the barracks of the "borderiers", the church and clarified the approaches to them.

Landing machine guns are loaded onto armored boats.

Under the leadership of the chairman of the fish farm, Kharlampov, sappers and scouts were loaded into kayuks. They were supposed to clear the landing zone, make passages in the barbed wire, and in case of detection by the enemy, detect all firing points that had been activated and retreat to their own shore.

Cayuks landed scouts and sappers right at the barbed wire two hours before the landing and retreated 30 meters, continuously rowing against the current to keep the boats abeam those places where the sappers landed. The sappers in the main sections completely removed the barbed wire submerged in the water, and in the less important ones, due to lack of time, they made separate passages in it, which were marked with willow twigs.

Then the sappers moved ashore and began to search for mines, gradually moving towards the second line of barbed wire, installed near the Romanian trenches.

In the end, they were discovered and withdrew, not responding to the fire opened by the enemy. According to the report made to the regiment commander, two wide passages were made in the barrier, marks were left for the landing, no mines were found in front of the Romanian positions.

The landing party at that time concentrated at the berths, and the first wave made covert landings on armored boats.

The armored boats of the Reni group assigned to the mine laying, like last time, took mines in Izmail before dark (given the complexity of the situation, the flagship miner Issarev went on the lead boat), and at 2 o'clock in the morning they took off and went at low speed to the Sulinsky gulf. But in thick fog and darkness, the armored boats slipped past him, not seeing the branches, and climbed up the Danube to Romanian territory.

The mistake was discovered only after the detachment stumbled upon a monument to the soldiers of the Ryazan regiment, who died while crossing the Danube in 1877, which emerged from the fog, located near Machin, an eight-meter cast-iron pyramid. Finding a mistake, the armored boats went back. When they went down to the Sulinsky vent and turned into it, it was already beginning to get light, and the fog began to thin.

Suddenly, a hundred meters from the lead boat, the side and towers of a Romanian monitor disguised with branches appeared in the reeds. The parking lot of the monitors was much closer than the flotilla had expected.

Subsequently, Issarev regretted for a long time that the boats were not torpedo boats ... Having opened fire on the nearest monitor, he began to turn around, simultaneously dropping mines. Of the three armored boats following him, in the conditions of a suddenly started battle and a retreat maneuver (which they began to carry out, developing maximum speed), only one managed to drop mines. As a result, only 8 minutes were delivered.

Simultaneously with the mines, the boats began to drop smoke bombs - there was no equipment for placing smoke curtains on them. The return fire of the Romanians was no less erratic than the fire of armored boats - only the BKA-112 received serious damage.

From two direct hits of Romanian shells on the boat, the propeller shaft and steering were out of order, and a fire broke out in one of the compartments. Thanks to the efforts of the crew, the fire was extinguished, but the boat did not move.

"BKA-111" took him in tow and dragged him to the Prut.

The monitors "Shock" and "Martynov" took up firing positions in the Kislitskaya channel before dawn.

At the beginning of the fourth, the armored boats moved away from the berths and moved down the Danube at low speed, the engines for stealth worked on underwater exhaust. On the fairway, the detachment lined up in a wake column with Lieutenant Mayorov's BKA-132 (with the detachment commander Lieutenant Kozlov on board) as the lead one and, turning off the engines, continued to move by self-propelled demolition towards the right bank.

As soon as the landing force entered the fairway, artillery preparation began. The calculation for artillery preparation was made as follows: the armored boats had to pass by self-alloying about three kilometers at a current speed of more than a meter per second. At a safe distance from their fire, the landing should be within 15 minutes.

The division's artillery opened fire first, then the coastal batteries, and lastly the monitors, which had an order for a significant part of the ammunition

leave for direct support of the landing. The fire was at maximum pace.

Enemy artillery this time opened fire a little earlier than planned. And the fire turned out to be quite accurate - from close gaps among the paratroopers on the decks, the first dead and wounded appeared. The armored boats switched to surface exhaust, performed an "all of a sudden" turn and rushed, roaring their engines like airplanes at the start, in front line formation to the immediate landing sites.

Coastal batteries and monitors immediately shifted their fire deep into the coast to fight enemy batteries.

As a result, the artillery fire on the ships weakened, but the unsuppressed firing points at the water's edge opened fire, prudently keeping quiet during the shelling of the coast.

The boats themselves began to hit them. The enemy fire intensified, and the battle began to acquire a stubborn character even before the moment of landing. The enemy concentrated fire on the lead boat, which became left-flank after the transfer to the front line. On the BKA-132, armor-piercing shells and shrapnel damaged the casing of the engine room, air line, electrical wiring, engine cooling manifold and spare oil tank. He began to slow down.

To cover the commander of the landing, "BKA-133" and "BKA-134" went around him on the left and fired continuously from all types of weapons. Tank turrets fired at bunkers, machine guns fired tracer bullets at trenches, and paratroopers fired at them from the decks. The fast move made it possible to reach the coast without losses among the ships.

Romanian machine gun firing.

The BKA-131 of Lieutenant Peryshkin was the first to reach the shore, overtaking the damaged 132nd on the right. The depth turned out to be insufficient to come close to the shore, and the armored boat, stopping, began to land paratroopers from the side into the water. Then he immediately received a direct hit in the wheelhouse. Peryshkin was shell-shocked and received two shrapnel wounds to his shoulder and chest, but continued to lead the landing.

A little later, "133rd" and "134th" pulled up. But under the water, driven stakes were discovered that were not noticed by scouts and sappers, and it turned out to be difficult.

Noticing the hitch, the boats coming from behind began to pick up to the left. The BKA-132, which had resumed its course, no longer had room and time to maneuver, and it stumbled between the 134th and 131st, having managed to approach a distance sufficient for landing. Infantrymen also began to jump from it.

A Romanian mortar battery opened fire on the paratroopers, who had so far landed from only two boats. The paratroopers lay under exploding mines on the very edge of the coast, and sometimes in the water. Part of the paratroopers did not dare to jump from boats into deep water, boiling from mine fragments, but on the decks they were overtaken by bursts of machine guns and fragments of Romanian shells.

The first to notice the delay was the SK-125 small hunter, who had lagged behind the armored boats, but his position was no longer very convenient for suppressing the battery, which was located on the outskirts of the city, and therefore the commander of the hunter Timoshenko,

after briefly conferring with Yurkovski, he ordered the gunners and machine gunners to suppress the closest firing points on the shore.

The monitor "Martynov", which was further from the coast and had a better view, began to hunt for the battery.

While the covering ships were trying to suppress the firing points, the paratroopers managed to get ashore under heavy fire. Some of the commanders had already been knocked out, and understudies of ship commanders were sent ashore from armored boats to command paratroopers - former cadets of the Black Sea Naval School, who on June 24, 1941, by order of the People's Commissar of the Navy, were awarded the rank of "lieutenant".

One of them, Fyodor Obrazko, was killed in a few minutes by a mine explosion, having received two fatal shrapnel wounds...

On the left bank, having learned about the current situation, Sirota gave the order to load two platoons into the IP-22 and IP-23 tugboats and send them to the landing site.

A little later, the border PK-25 managed to land on the shore, on which the gas pipeline was broken, but the motorists of the boat managed to splice it under fire. The infantrymen who landed from it were able to help the paratroopers hold out on the shore for a little more. Yurkovskiy, assessing the situation on the shore, ordered Timoshenko to land on the shore.

It was rather risky to approach on the largest landing ship, which also had a strong overload and, as a result, a large draft and low speed, to the coast, on which the firing points were still not suppressed, but it was already to lose

nothing.

Approaching slightly obliquely, the "midge" continued to fire from two 45-mm guns, two DShK and two "maxims".

I had to take the risk again: when the bottom struck the stones, Timoshenko ordered "turn up the speed" into the engine room pipe and literally pushed the small hunter onto the shore.

The SK-125 approached to the left of the dug-in stakes, and it had no problems landing, except, of course, for the fact that people jumped off the sides and moved up to the shore in water up to their throats.

For a small hunter, this was a serious achievement, since, due to its larger size compared to armored boats, a more powerful engine and weapons, it was so overloaded with troops that the waterline went under water, and the draft reached one and a half meters.

Simultaneously with the landing of paratroopers from the "midge", Yurkovskiy ordered to transport mortars from armored boats on "tuziks" (small boats). By this time, first "BK-134", and then "BK-133" also began to land troops. "BK-133", however, could not come close to the shore and, having dropped anchor, began to land people directly into deep water. Those who could swim supported those who did not know how to swim, weapons and people were transported on a "tuzik", inflatable chambers issued for each boat for the emergency evacuation of paratroopers, and on everything that helped to stay on the water.

Romanian infantryman in a trench.

Yurkovski was the first to jump into the water right over the railing and, having climbed ashore, began to organize people to attack the trenches, concentrating fighters opposite the destroyed sections of the wire fence, which the fighters immediately called the "gates of death."

The Martynov monitor finally found a mortar battery among the ruins on the outskirts of the city. But the mortarmen obviously had combat experience and were well trained. The battery transferred the fire to the monitor and, despite the maximum distance for it, achieved coverage.

Taking the left on board and going at low speed, the monitor opened fire on the battery. A few minutes later, two shells from the main caliber guns finally covered the battery, after which it stopped dueling fire and began to change position. The significance of this, in general, a small success was so great at that moment that the commander of the Martynov, Lieutenant Commander Shik, transmitted over the ship's broadcast: "The foreman of the 2nd article, Komsomol member Andrei Mayboroda, has just distinguished himself. It was his calculation that suppressed the fascist mortar battery.

The landed mortars began to bombard the Romanian trenches with mines.

The enemy fire began to weaken, and in the course of the battle there was a turning point. The soldiers felt it too. Gradually, the paratroopers began to crawl up to the passages in the wire. Gathering enough forces, Yurkovskiy ordered the attack. Throwing grenades at the enemy, the paratroopers rushed through the passages in the wire. The Romanians began to retreat along the lines of communication. However, at the last moment, an elderly Romanian corporal jumped out onto the parapet of the trench and unloaded a light machine gun magazine into the flank of the attackers. Red Army soldiers Trifon Reshetnyak and Ivan Moskalenko were killed on the spot, several people were injured.

Paratroopers

lay down.

The corporal, who managed to turn the tide of battle in moments, jumped back into the trench and, changing the store, continued to fire from behind cover. The retreating Romanian arrows began to pull up to him. Yurkovski threw a grenade into the trench and, shooting, rushed after him, he was supported. In hand-to-hand combat, the trench was

captured. About two dozen Romanians, who did not have time to withdraw, surrendered. The soldiers began to gain a foothold in the Romanian trenches.

The armored boats, which stopped firing along the coast with the start of the attack, after the success achieved, began to leave for the second wave of landing.

"BK-133", which gave up the anchor, now could not raise it - obviously, the given anchor caught on the stakes and got stuck.

The squad leader Baboshin had to dive and clear the anchor.

While the BK-133 was trying to regain mobility, captured prisoners were brought to it. But there was no one to guard them, the team remaining in the ranks was only enough to control the armored boat in battle. Its commander, Senior Lieutenant Tkachenko, ordered: "All prisoners in the bow and stern! Keep machine guns at gunpoint! Just a little - fire! And the armored boat finally moved back.

At this time, tugboats pulled up to the landing site. Having received reinforcements, Yurkovski began to smoke out the Romanians from coastal bunkers, and the 1st

Vasitsky's battalion. Enemy fire along the fairway noticeably weakened, and the delivery of the main landing forces took place without any problems, with minor losses: two boats received minor damage, one sailor was killed, two were seriously wounded.

The battle began directly for the city, but it no longer had such a fierce character as the battle on the shore. The enemy did not have a unified defense system in the city. If there were hitches, then the most dangerous strongholds were stormed by the paratroopers of Yurkovskiy's company. In general, the offensive in the city was actually also led by Yurkovskiy, with his company moving ahead of the main forces through the city in its center, and the commandant's semi-company of Kletkin and the platoon of Mustafa's assigned company were moving through the western quarters along the Tataru canal. Both groups, according to Yurkovskoto's plan, went to the city cemetery from two sides, where the positions of the Romanian artillery were located. The Romanians withdrew, having managed to take out only one battery of the three that occupied positions near the cemetery - the rest were either partially defeated during a duel with monitors, or lost their horses. One of the batteries of 37-mm guns was captured intact - it was in a thick-walled brick warehouse, with embrasure windows looking at the berths in the backwater of Tataru in case of an attempt to bypass along the canal, and did not take part in the battle. Yurkovski gave a white rocket, which meant the end of support for the landing by fire from boats.

On the captured coast, radio and then telephone communications were organized. Due to the strong current, a telephone cable across the Danube was only managed on the third attempt, when heavy ropes were tied to it at regular intervals.

stones.

After that, PNSh-1 Ovcharov moved ashore.

Skirmishes took place in the city not only with the Romanian soldiers, but with the besieged colonists. These were retired non-commissioned officers and corporals who received land plots for impeccable service. The siegemen helped the soldiers of one of the Romanian companies of the 15th naval battalion, who had no combat experience and, being in reserve, were surrounded in the cemetery area,

escape from the encirclement and move to the nearest farms, located 3 km from Kiliya-veke. They were pursued by Mustafa's platoon.

By 8 o'clock in the morning, the fighting in the city as a whole had ceased. Only on the bell tower in the center of the city did a German officer-instructor with several Romanian soldiers continue to fight back from a machine gun. To suppress the machine gun, which could not be destroyed by the forces of the assault groups due to the losses incurred, first the BKA-134, and then the Martynov monitor, were allocated. The machine gun fell silent, but when Ovcharov and the secretary of the Komsomol bureau of the regiment, Lieutenant Burov, appeared on the square in front of the bell tower, who were about to hoist a red flag on it, opened fire again. Then they began to fire at the bell tower from a pulled-up "forty-five". After three shots, three Romanian soldiers descended from the bell tower, shouting that they were surrendering.

Then one of them, showing something with gestures, went up together with Ovcharov and Burov to the platform where there was a machine gun and a dead German officer was lying around. The soldier explained that they themselves killed him in order to stop the futile resistance. Lieutenant Ovcharov, together with the Komsomol organizer, raised a red flag on the bell tower.

For this feat, lieutenants Ovcharov and Burov, by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 07/14/1941, among other 45 participants in the Danube battles, were awarded the Order of the Red Banner ...

The fuss with the machine gun lasted about an hour.

Only at the beginning of the 10th, Ovcharov reported from the bridgehead by phone to Sirota: "The enemy has been utterly defeated, the city of Kiliya-veke is occupied by our units." However, Sirota was careful not to immediately report to Tsirulnikov and consulted with Poplavsky whether the operation should be considered completed.

Perhaps his doubts were influenced by an air strike that had just been delivered to the captured bridgehead by a group of 6 low-speed Romanian M.555 seaplanes guarding the same number of fighters [AB 80]. The fighters of the 96th OIAE, covering the bridgehead from the air, started a battle with the enemy, after which no casualties were reported by either side. Several people were killed on the ground, the conductor Samson Kharlamov was wounded.

Romanian Yileny.

Poplavsky suggested waiting another hour with the summary, just in case, and at the same time counting the trophies during this time.

Sirota agreed and said into the telephone receiver:

"That's it, Ovtcharov. Let the fighters of Yurkovsky and Stadnik not go far into the depths of enemy territory. Power cannot be scattered. Watch out for the appearance of the enemy on the river."

The machine-gun company of Stadniuk saddled the road to Sulina, which stretched along the sandy ridge through the floodplains.

The commandant's semi-company, together with Mustafa's platoon and the units that had pulled up, laid siege to the Kiliya farm and other nearby farms, where the remnants of the garrison retreated. However, the Romanians had many residents there who fled from the city, and did not accept the battle, entering into negotiations. From the Romanian side, the negotiations were conducted by the company commander of the 15th Marine Battalion, Captain Eftimiye Croatoru, from the Soviet side, by Lieutenant Yakov Mustafa.

The Romanians, who were unable to retreat to Sulina, for the most part laid down their arms - the floodplains were not passable everywhere, however, some of the soldiers still tried to escape through them. Some succeeded, some were detained by fighters of a machine-gun company that covered the road.

The number of Romanians who surrendered in the reports eventually reached 510, in official reports, most likely, this number is not very high, and, perhaps, due to those captured in other sectors and in the first landing.

In the diary of one of the participants in the events, Lieutenant Ovcharov, there is a recording of his conversation with Sergeant Kurbanov during the escort of prisoners:

"Sergeant Kurbanov, how many prisoners are you taking?

"Two hundred and thirty-two pieces, comrade lieutenant!" And for the first time today we led the pier one hundred and eighty private. Only four hundred and twelve. Three of them are officers.

- You think well, comrade sergeant! .. - And how do you know that there are officers among these privates? They are all without uniforms ... Did you confess yourself?

"Why should I count badly, Comrade Deputy Political Officer?" Before the army, I worked as a collective farm accountant. And the Romanian officer ... He himself did not speak - he was silent. I learned from silk underwear! A soldier is a very cheap manufactory on a shirt.

The Romanians themselves estimated the losses at 358 people, given that some of the siegemen, who were not military personnel, were also captured. The total figure of 412 prisoners given to Ovcharov seems quite plausible.

There were significantly more captured rifles, about a thousand, since many of them were found in warehouses in the city. Also, 8 guns and more than two dozen light and heavy machine guns were captured.

As for the losses of the landing force and the flotilla, official sources called a completely unrealistic figure - 5 killed and 7 wounded, which clearly has nothing to do with the actual losses, which could not be less than 100 people.

By 10 o'clock in the morning, the new bridgehead had a size of 12 kilometers along the front and 4 kilometers in depth. The 2nd and 3rd battalions of the regiment were engaged in its expansion, moving on armored boats and monitors, as on June 24th.

By the end of the day, Captain Sirota's regiment, upstream, had closed its right flank with the left flank of the bridgehead captured on 24 June. Downstream, they managed to advance up to Periprava, which they could not capture on the move. The total length of the bridgehead along the front was 75 km. All the islands located in this area were also captured.

Success was reported to the authorities.

In the operational summary of the headquarters of the Southern Front of June 26, 1941, the wording was still quite cautious:

OPERSVODKA No. 06/OG K 20.00 26.6.41

HEADQUARTERS OF THE SOUTHERN FRONT VINNYTSIA

Card 1000 000

First. During the night and day of June 26, 1941, the enemy showed no activity on the entire front, with the exception of the Sculeni region, where the enemy, after receiving reinforcements, again launched a counterattack in the afternoon. The fight continues.

Our units and border guards, according to unverified data, in the area of Kilia Poue forced the river. Danube (northern arm), taken up to 500 prisoners. On the rest of the front, no change.

Second. 18th Army - the situation is unchanged. Parts of the army continue to concentrate.

Third. 9th Army - artillery and machine-gun fire along the entire front. In the Skuleni region, a battle is underway with enemy units that have gone over to the attack. Parts of the army, together with the border units, crossed the river. Danube near Chilia Poue. On the rest of the front of the army without changes.

Fourth. The weather is clear and dry. Road condition is satisfactory.

Chief of Staff of the Southern Front

SHISHENIN Deputy Head of Operational Department LYAMIN

And on June 27, the whole country learned from a message from the Soviet Information Bureau that "on the night of June 27, a group of our troops, with the support of a river flotilla, crossed the Danube and captured advantageous points, 510 prisoners (including 2 officers), [11 guns and a lot of equipment."

The date was not exact, but what can you do, it was believed that the Soviet Information Bureau should report on the events taking place in the last hour.

The command of the Black Sea Fleet began to think about the development of success. Moreover, the tactics of resolving the issue was the same as that of the flotilla command before the first landing.

Only now, Vice Admiral Oktyabsky instructed Rear Admiral Abramov to find out how the command of the 14th Corps views the possibility of a joint offensive operation with the forces of the fleet, army units and the Danube Flotilla in order to capture the Black Sea port of Sulina.

The command of the 14th SC looked at the possibility of a joint offensive operation as before. Egorov explained that he did not have sufficient forces and means, and

a little later he added that the landing "does not allow the general situation at the front."

Foray of Romanian Monitors

(27th of June)

A group of 5 Romanian monitors, stationed near Galati, was the biggest headache for the command of the Danube Flotilla.

Even in the pre-war "action plan of the troops of the Odessa military district to cover the state border" the superiority of the Romanian river division "both in quantitative and especially in qualitative terms (artillery, armor)" was noted.

At the same time, the flagship of the Danube Flotilla, Podkolzin, made calculations for a battle between the monitors of the flotilla and the monitors of a potential enemy. And these calculations were disappointing. There was only a purely theoretical possibility of penetrating the armor of Romanian monitors with Soviet 100-mm shells - "when firing from a very short distance and when the projectile meets the armor at a right angle." Larger, 130-mm guns that did not have such problems were only on the Udarny.

In such a situation, coastal artillery, armed with large-caliber guns - 152- and 130-mm, acquired a significant role. Therefore, at the first opportunity, guns were transferred from Odessa for another battery - the 726th. Barges with 122-mm guns were the first to be unloaded in the Izmail port as soon as it began to operate.

The battery was placed not far from Izmail near the farm Kopanaya beam.

Captain Krivosheev commanded the new battery. However, the commissioning of the battery was delayed, mainly due to the lack of appropriate shells, which were not in the warehouses of the division, and delivery from Odessa was also difficult because all the ships coming from there had to settle for a long time in the Zhebriyana area before they managed to slip through the Romanian batteries under Peripravo. In the event of the appearance of monitors in the fairway, a variant of their attack by fighters of the 96th squadron was developed. For the "seagulls" 100-kg bombs and corresponding hardpoints were prepared. On June 25, 3 units of SB bombers from the 78th UAE, Major Baderbenkov, tried to detect monitors, but could not do it and dropped bombs on Galati.

Aerial reconnaissance could not detect them either. Due to their demonstrative nature, there were no special hopes for mine productions.

It was clear that an attempt to put the monitors into action was inevitable, and with the increasing success of the flotilla, the likelihood of their use increased more and more. Thunder struck on the evening of June 27.

On June 27, after 21:00, shortly before dusk, at the FKP from the commander of the Reni group, from the 724th battery and from the SNiS post located near Reni, reports almost simultaneously arrived that a column of enemy monitors appeared from the direction of Galati and was going down. At the same time, long-range batteries from Galati, Tulcea and Isakcha opened fire on the positions of the Reni group. A prearranged signal was immediately transmitted to units of the 14th SC and coastal defense.

To strike at the breaking monitors, the plan of action provided for the call of bomber aircraft, but given that it was based near Odessa, the planes simply would not have had enough flight time before dark. But the squadron of the flotilla, based at the Izmail-Kiraklia airfield, managed to reach the target before dark. Captain Korobitsyn received an order to send all combat-ready fighters to attack.

The artillerymen went into action on the planned battle table, developed to coordinate the fire of the Reni group of ships, the 724th battery and the 99th howitzer artillery regiment.

For the 724th battery, the target was within reach almost from the moment it was discovered, and it opened fire first. On its NP, advantageously located, there were also artillery reconnaissance officers of the howitzer artillery regiment.

The monitor guns and field howitzers engaged in a fire raid at the limit of their range. Reports from them came every two or three minutes, in clear text, and they all reported in general one thing: "The column of monitors continues to go down."

As the data was refined, it turned out that only 4 out of 5 monitors follow in the column.

Loading shells on the monitor.

The command had an idea to throw the Reni group of monitors of Captain-Lieutenant Krinov towards them for a short-range battle. But if there were no "Shock" among them with 133-mm guns, such a battle would most likely have fatal consequences, and most importantly, under no circumstances would it still give a chance of success - two more monitors could appear from the Tulchinsky girl at any moment .

As the monitors approached, they began to fire at them from the shore and water, without exception, all the guns located in the Reni area. The 96th squadron reached the monitors in full strength before dark and began to attack, but then it turned out that they managed to hang 100-kg bombs on less than half of the fighters.

The monitors briskly fought back from the fighters, but not a single vehicle was lost, although some brought pretty solid fragmentation holes to

planes.

There were no reports of damage to the enemy from any post - the former Austro-Hungarian monitors had a high survivability. The enemy was steadily approaching the front line, and this could mean anything: from an attempt to defeat the Krinov group to the shelling of Izmail or a bridgehead, or an amphibious landing.

In the oncoming darkness, a fast-moving enemy would also have an advantage in the battle with the 724th battery.

Most likely, the current situation would not have ended well for the flotilla, since all possible measures to prevent a breakthrough had already been applied and turned out to be insufficient, but ...

8 minutes after the discovery of the enemy, the Rhenian SNiS post transmitted: "The enemy ships have sharply slowed down."

And a minute later:

"The ships are turning back..."

The post, of course, could have been confusing due to the approaching twilight and smoke from the many shells exploding in the fairway, but the report from the 724th battery confirmed: "The monitors suddenly turned everything and went back on their course."

The column began to move back towards Galati, accompanied, as long as the distance allowed, by coastal artillery fire. None of the monitors smoked or lost in the course - the reason why the enemy stopped the breakthrough remained as unclear as his intentions.

Most likely, the minefield laid out on June 24 played a role.

Having come under concentrated artillery fire, the effectiveness of which should have increased with every kilometer, having undergone an air attack, the enemy, obviously, still did not dare to force a mine barrier in such a situation, even knowing that the barrier was rare. With such a dense fire, conducted in the visibility of the correction posts, the monitors obviously did not dare to go through the minefield at low speed. And then, after all, they would have had to force it again, after the battle, which it is still unknown how it could have ended ... Considering all this, it was decided in the morning to strengthen the existing barrier by the flotilla, and an agreement was reached on setting up another barrier from the air by aviation forces, almost opposite Reni, from the fairway to the right bank.

However, additional measures were taken just in case.

Four G-5 torpedo boats arrived from Odessa under the command of Captain Lieutenant Tuul. The torpedo boats had experienced commanders. Among them are Afrikanov and Korymov, later Heroes of the Soviet Union. Deep in the night

torpedo boats entered the mouth of the Danube. To reduce noise, one motor was turned off.

However, when passing by Periprava, the boats were still found, only speed helped out. The loudly noisy GAM-38 engines of Soviet boats continued to create problems for them in terms of covert movement along the canals.

Until July 3, the boats guarded the Romanian monitors on the Danube, until they were recalled by a com. fleet to Ochakov.

Crossing of the Krinova group to Lake Cahul

(June 28-29)

If the Kiliya group of ships, defending in the Kislitskaya channel, with the capture of a bridgehead on the right bank of the Danube, ceased to be fired upon by the enemy, then the Reniyskaya, captain-lieutenant Krinov, was still under fire from long-range guns.

Here a stalemate began to develop.

It was not possible to expand the bridgehead up the Danube - it was more important to expand it down to the mouth, in order to at least make the area of Soviet navigation along the Kiliysk branch unfired, since it was the main supply of everything necessary from Odessa.

It was also undesirable to take the Krinov group down the Danube to Izmail: constrained in terms of maneuver, it nevertheless was at the forefront with advantageous firing positions.

Three monitors and armored boats of the group supported the units of the 14th SC, defending on the Danube and the Prut, with fire, and prevented the enemy from crossing to the left bank.

Three monitors, a dozen armored boats and two minesweepers were under enemy fire from the first minutes of the war. The ships had to hastily change their anchorages already at dawn on June 22, and then several times a day.

All possible methods and techniques of camouflage were used: the ships hid in the reeds, thickets, covered with greenery and cut down trees, went under the slopes of the right (Romanian) bank of the Prut. However, after a few hours, the shelling from long-range guns inevitably resumed.

The most likely reason for this constant detection was the use of sound-measuring equipment by the enemy. Therefore, on the ships, and especially on the monitors, when live firing was not carried out, no mechanisms were turned on, the radios did not go on the air, but nevertheless, every 4-6 hours, heavy artillery from Isaccea and Galati began to feel for the positions of the ships, sometimes covering them. 3 Romanian floating batteries with 152-mm guns were sometimes connected to long-range coastal artillery, which, in turn, hid no less carefully than Soviet monitors, but because of the superiority of the Romanians in heavy artillery in the Reni sector, they were mainly afraid of air raids. One of these batteries fired from the Transdanubian lake Krapina.

The hunt was mainly for monitors as long-range artillery carriers. Monitors answered the same. They managed to suppress one long-range

battery near Galati. Armored boats in the interests of monitors systematically detected and destroyed enemy observation posts behind the Prut.

But the monitors were forced to maneuver on a very short section of the Prut - about a kilometer from the mouth to the bridge, blown up by the Romanians in 1940, whose farms blocked the river.

The heavy gun of the Romanians is firing.

The monitors did not risk protruding into the Danube, only armored boats went into it for minelaying and on patrol. After the raid of the Romanian monitors on the evening of June 27, there was an assumption that his goal could be just an attempt to eliminate the monitors of the Reni group.

The next time such an attempt could turn out to be quite successful, since with the approach of two more monitors from the Tulchinsky girl, the fate of Krinov's group would actually be sealed.

Therefore, it was urgent to secure the Reni group without withdrawing it down the Danube.

The exit was prompted by a Romanian battery on Lake Krapina. Krinov drew attention to another lake, Kagul, located behind the Soviet bank of the Danube, somewhat below the Reni. The lake stretched for many kilometers, was quite deep and had dense thickets of reeds near the shores. Due to its length and location, it could be used both as a firing position and as a shelter beyond the reach of the Romanian batteries.

However, the entrance to the lake was a non-navigable small river Viketa, moreover, blocked by a fishing dam. But an unusually high summer flood changed the situation to such an extent that the Viketa, due to the rise of the water in the Danube, changed direction and flowed back into the lake.

On June 28, Krinov sent boat minesweepers to explore the river, and their commanders reported that after the fishing dam was blown up, a transition to the monitor lake would be possible. But to take advantage of this opportunity could only be decided as a last resort, since if the water level fell, the detachment would be locked in the lake. It remained to be hoped that the possible drop in the water level would not be too sharp and, with constant monitoring of it, the ships would have time to go back to the Danube.

The extreme case came very soon. On June 29, the situation in the Reni region became alarming.

The enemy did not make a single fire attack and all day conducted only sighting, and this sighting was distinguished by increased accuracy. A massive artillery attack on ships was being prepared, and, most likely, with the involvement of, in addition to stationary batteries, and heavy field artillery.

All day long, intensive aerial reconnaissance was carried out in the area where the ships were located.

If the group was detected from the air, the enemy would concentrate on attacking the monitors, and it was difficult for them to fight off even a small group of obsolete bombers.

The Reni group did not have anti-aircraft cover, and the air defense systems of the Zheleznyakov, Zhemchuzhin and Rostovtsev monitors, which were part of the group, were more than

modest: each had 4 45-mm universal guns and 4 quadruple machine guns.

In the evening of June 29, Krinov gathered the commanders of the ships of the group on the monitor of the Rostovites and invited everyone to express their opinion on further actions in the current conditions.

It seemed that the Romanian command considered the Reni group as its closest target and the raid of monitors on June 27 was carried out precisely on it, and was not an attempt to respond to the unsuccessful raid of the Black Sea Fleet ships on Constanta on June 25-26, as the flotilla command first thought.

The monitor commanders Marinushkin, Vizalmirsky, Orlov believed that the possibilities of parking at the mouth of the Prut had been exhausted. Krinov himself assessed the situation in the same way. After the military council on the Rostovtsev, he radioed the commander that he considered it necessary to go to Lake Cahul that same night in order to continue the previous combat missions based there.

Rear Admiral Abramov, who was near the Kiliya channel in a slightly different position than the Reni group, Krinov's fears seemed somewhat exaggerated.

In the harsh environment of the first week of the war that was ending, leaving a combat position without a fight could well be regarded as cowardice. But it was also not safe to test Krinov's fears: the artillery raid and air strikes could begin in the morning and before the next night it was quite possible to lose all the monitors.

On reflection, the commander authorized the proposed actions, including additional minelaying.

Before the ships moved to a new parking lot, it was decided to put a mine bank in the channel connecting the Danube with Lake Krapina on the right bank. Krinov decided to spend the last six mines remaining with him, of course, not in order to lock up the floating battery in Krivno, which did not have its own power. The lieutenant commander was worried about the last Romanian monitor that did not leave with the column. According to the report of the 40th Air Regiment, she was sunk on June 27, just before the raid of 4 monitors from Galati, in which she really did not take part. But the monitor (we were talking about the "Ardeal") could well be in the lake and go out from there to intercept the ships.

Subsequent events confirmed the validity of the fears of the captain lieutenant. Despite the assurances of the Soviet command, "Ardeal" was again seen in the ranks. Some authors, however, still optimistically believe that the Ardeal was nevertheless sunk, but, having landed on the ground, only went into the water a little, which allowed it to be quickly raised, repaired and re-commissioned. But this version has not yet been documented.

The mines were successfully placed (this time covertly) by Lieutenant Kondakov's armored boat.

With the onset of darkness, the monitors and the rest of the ships, without turning on the engines, went downstream to the mouth of Viketa and safely entered it, and then into the lake. By morning, on the site of the destroyed fishing dam, a cable with logs imitating it was stretched so that aerial reconnaissance would not notice any changes. A water-measuring station was equipped on Viket for continuous monitoring of the water level. A building of three monitors was also deployed here. Another corps was in the location of one of the batteries of the howitzer regiment near Kartal.

Boat minesweepers.

In Lake Cahul, three monitors got rid of the daily shelling of heavy batteries. Here it was easier to disperse and camouflage the ships, and the Romanians could not find their moorings. The monitors themselves, advancing to firing positions in the northern part of the lake (closest to the area of \u200b\u200bits former positions at the mouth of the Prut), could, as before, support ground units and prevent the enemy from forcing the Danube.

Assault on the bridgehead

(30 June)

The 75-kilometer shallow strip of the right bank of the Danube was held by extremely limited forces. By June 28, the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 23rd Infantry Regiment were removed from their positions and transferred to the left bank. Now the entire bridgehead was held by two battalions, which, after heavy fighting for the retention of Satul-nou and the capture of Kiliya-veke, were, as reported in the reports of Divisional Commander Tsirulnikov, "incomplete".

The continued rise in water facilitated the defense, but at the same time gave the fighting a rather specific character. The floodplains were relatively impassable, and the entire foothold turned into a chain of islands and peninsulas of various shapes and sizes, surrounded on all sides by water.

This did not stop the Romanians. They moved the correction posts and even gun emplacements to the rafts and kept the foothold under continuous harassing fire.

The landing force could use fire support only in the event of a serious enemy offensive. In such a case, the spotters of the howitzer regiment, coastal batteries and monitors were constantly behind the Danube.

There was essentially no organization of combat command and control of troops on the bridgehead. Since two battalions of different regiments acted in the interests of the flotilla and scattered strongholds on the right bank were supplied only by water and were supported mainly by the flotilla's firepower, Yegorov soon came to the conclusion that the flotilla should be responsible for the bridgehead, with everything located on it.

Both battalions, which had already begun to be called "Transdanubian" at the headquarters of the corps, were operationally subordinated to the flotilla by Yegorov's oral order, which in turn (and not at all verbally) was operationally subordinated to him ...

On June 30, Cape Satul-nou, located opposite Izmail, was subjected to unusually heavy shelling, after which virtually continuous attacks by the Romanian infantry began from the floodplains.

Through a direct telephone wire, since the FKP of the flotilla was just opposite, the battalion commander captain Turgan constantly reported on the aggravating situation.

At the command post, the flotilla kept Olympic calm, since, according to reports, attempts to "dislodge the landing from the bridgehead", "drop the landing and

cross the Danube" were undertaken by the enemy every day and always ended with the fact that "the attack was successfully repulsed", "the Romanians were forced to retreat under heavy fire", "the Romanians were forced to withdraw, the enemy had heavy losses"...

But when the enemy, according to reports, began to wedge into the defense, Rear Admiral Abramov ordered his chief of staff, captain Grigoriev:

"Take ... a boat and go there. On the spot you can see what can be done. And don't come back until the situation is fixed."

Grigoriev, however, did not go directly to the bridgehead, but first jumped into the command post of the 287th SP and immediately asked the regimental commander for reinforcements. Major Sultan-Galiev did not provide reinforcements, saying that he had no reserves, but sent a captain from his headquarters together with Grigoriev to the bridgehead to form his own idea of what was happening on the bridgehead.

On the spot, it turned out that Turgan was somewhat reinsured - there was no wedging, the paratroopers were still in their full-profile trenches, in which they did not suffer any special losses from shelling, but the enemy infantry was within line of sight and in solid numbers: at least three battalions. On a front of up to three kilometers, it covered the positions of the battalion in a semicircle and gradually increased the fire pressure, slowly getting closer.

Armored boat with a turret from the T-28 tank.

There was a fierce firefight. All the weapons at the disposal of the battalion were already involved. When the Romanians managed to get closer to 200-300 meters at one of the sites, Turgan had nothing to throw them back. During the transfer of forces from other sectors of the defense, the enemy crawled away, but the trenches were immediately exposed, and the situation was repeated in another sector. Grigoriev was worried that the enemy would be able to cut through the battle formations of the battalion.

Contacting the FKP, he demanded:

"Add fire here at the expense of anything!"

The battalion was already supported by both monitors - "Udarny" and "Martynov", stationed in the Kislitskaya channel, and the 725th coastal battery (its new neighbor, the 726th battery, was still inactive). Therefore, the FKP did not really understand how, in fact, the chief of staff wanted to add fire. This was reported to Grigoriev.

In principle, it was possible to withdraw armored boats from the Kislitskaya channel. But, fearing air raids during the day, they were not taken out of camouflaged parking lots. It was problematic to get Abramov's sanction for the withdrawal of armored boats without a real wedging of enemy infantry.

After hesitating, the chief of staff decided that Abramov's order to rectify the situation on the spot gives the right to take the measures that he deems necessary, and one can insure against a possible raid by Romanian aviation.

After that, once again contacting the FKP by phone, he called through the operational duty officer for an attack two links of fighters, and by radio ordered a detachment of armored boats to go to Satul-nou.

It didn't take long for both of them to get there, but the fighters managed to climb into

air and fly earlier and began to attack. Approaching armored boats under the slope of the coast at the water's edge were met by the adjutant of the chief of staff, foreman Troyan, and prosemaphore: "To hit visible targets."

The visible target was enemy infantry. The cannons of the boats acted as assault guns at the forefront, hitting the advancing enemy infantry from about half a kilometer away with their rapid-fire three-inch guns and quadruple machine guns.

While the armored boats and fighters, making approach after approach, concentrated on one sector, Turgan and Grigoriev transferred most of the infantry and company mortars to another. During the battle, a fracture began to emerge.

The turret of the T-28 tank, dismantled from the project 1124 armored boat.

A raid by enemy aircraft, even seaplanes, after the departure of the fighters could again complicate the situation, but there was no air raid - all Romanian aviation was involved at that time in the more northern sectors of the front. The enemy tried to hit the armored boats with long-range batteries from the Tulcea area, but the ships successfully covered themselves from them by the cape itself, keeping in the "dead zone" under the slope of the coast, while they themselves successfully fired at enemy infantry, using the bend of the coastline.

The Romanian infantry began to crawl back into the floodplains, after which the fire of the ships was transferred to the near part of the reed thickets in order to prevent the enemy from concentrating for new attacks.

An hour and a half later, Grigoriev was able to report to Abramov that "the situation on the bridgehead has been restored, and the enemy is not active." In the evening report, the number of the enemy, who was trying to eliminate the bridgehead, was increased to two regiments.

Counter-battery fight

(July 1-7)

In the following days after the battle at Cape Satul-nou, the enemy did not make active attempts to seize the bridgehead and concentrated on shelling, realizing his superiority in long-range artillery.

The situation was to some extent changed by the commissioning of the 726th battery - the only mobile long-range battery available to the flotilla command.

They could not put it into operation for more than a week. Delivered on barges on June 25 and first of all unloaded in the port of Izmail after the resumption of its work, she had neither equipped positions, nor personnel and officers, nor ammunition.

If the positions were equipped fairly quickly, the problem with the personnel was solved by transferring people from neighboring batteries and delivering artillerymen called from the reserve from Odessa, then issues with the command staff and especially with the delivery of ammunition were resolved more slowly.

The battery commander, Captain Krivosheev, seeing the intensity of the counter-battery fight in the flotilla sector, did his best to increase the combat capability

battery prior to its introduction into battle, knowing that it is located within the reach of numerically superior enemy batteries.

Taking advantage of the fact that there was no ammunition for 122-mm A-19 guns in the naval warehouses, and their delivery from Odessa was delayed due to the difficulty of overcoming the shelled area near Periprava, he spent all the time available on training personnel, accustoming him to the specifics of the counter-battery fight. The captain even risked showing some "politically incorrectness": if on the neighboring 725th and 724th batteries scheduled political classes were held on the theme "Readiness for self-sacrifice is the highest prowess of a Soviet soldier", approved in the political propaganda department of the flotilla, then on the 726th, by order of the commander, the topic has been changed to "Best Battery Armor - Great Disguise".

After equipping gun yards, a command post, ammunition cellars and shelters for tractors, Krivosheev took to the air on a U-2 and flew over the battery several times at different heights until he was convinced that the camouflage was reliable.

When the shells were finally delivered and the personnel were unloading for two days, Krivosheev, before transferring the battery to a firing position, spent both days at the battery's NP and correction posts, studying the location and composition of the Romanian batteries, rechecking the distance to those visible by flashes and clarifying the position of those assumed by sound measurements. ..

A Romanian heavy battery is firing.

On the night of July 3, the battery was secretly transferred to firing positions. On the same night, Zhukov, deputy battery commander for political affairs, was summoned to the political propaganda department of the flotilla, where all the political instructors of the units were already located. The commander of the flotilla, Rear Admiral Abramov, holding a telegraph tape in his hands, announced:

"There is an important message on the radio. It is desirable for everyone - both commanders, and political workers, and staff members - to be in units, to ensure listening to the transmission from Moscow ... "

For this reason, the first opening of fire by the battery was again postponed, now until the end of the transmission - since after it a fire fight could start, and then there would be no time for important messages ...

The important message turned out to be Stalin's speech, the first since the start of the war. After such an event, of course, a rally was arranged, at which, in order of subordination, the battery commander, political instructor and secretaries of the party and Komsomol organizations began to speak in succession.

When the secretary of the Komsomol organization, Sergeant Tsarev, in turn, assured the party and the government on behalf of the entire personnel that, defending the Motherland, the battery soldiers would fight the enemy to the last breath and to the last drop of blood, the Romanians, who apparently managed to detect the appearance of guns on firing positions, they were the first to launch a fire raid, not allowing the Komsomol organizer to finish speaking. Romanian shells began to explode a few hundred meters from the battery, but the crews prepared by Krivosheev quickly and in an organized manner entered their first battle, although he took them somewhat by surprise.

However, Krivosheev foresaw such a situation, and he had his own measures to raise morale, no less effective than those of political workers. All gunners, gunners and tractor drivers were taken from batteries that had been fighting for a week and had combat experience.

One of them, the commander of the 2nd gun Gerasimenko, who had already fought on the 725th battery, at the command of Krivosheev even managed to be the first to fire a projectile prepared in advance for photography with an inscription made in chalk: "Antonescu - for memory!"

After several volleys, the enemy battery stopped firing.

At 17.30, the flotilla commander reported to the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet that battery No. 726 had successfully tested its guns. After the report, the battery immediately got involved in combat work, which was carried out around the clock.

In view of the continued superiority of the enemy in long-range artillery, it was decided at night to use the guns of the battery under the leadership of the flagart of the Prosyantov flotilla as nomads.

The tractor towed the gun along the coast, shells were carried on another tractor. A stop was made at a prearranged point. The gun fired several shots at enemy batteries located in the Tulcea area, and immediately moved 400-500 meters further. Again, several shots were fired, and then the same rapid transition to the next temporary position followed. Shooting was carried out on the squares using a tablet.

The enemy, quite accurately pinpointing temporary positions, opened fire on them. It was not necessary to expect that he would accept the shots of a nomadic gun for the appearance of new batteries on the shore (if he could sometimes accept, then not for long). But in this way it was still possible to divert part of the fire of the enemy's long-range artillery. And the shelling itself - also with long-range guns - from ever new, unexpected positions should have created additional tension for him.

Most often, the Romanians shelled Izmail, and the Soviet artillery shelled Tulcea and Galati, since it is difficult to miss when shooting at the city even from a long distance. The counter-battery fight itself on both sides was notable for low efficiency - for almost a month of fighting, the enemy failed to completely disable a single battery.

Damaged guns were immediately repaired. Periodically, one or another battery had to stop firing for a short time in order to avoid being hit. It is no coincidence that for a long time the coastal artillery had losses only in the wounded, and even then small. It happened that the cannon was directly sprinkled with fragments, but its crew managed to hide in the niches of the gun yard.

Covering a stationary battery led to a ceasefire, but after waiting for the shelling and making minor repairs, she herself delivered a fire strike, usually at one of the batteries firing at that moment, and, in turn, forced her to cease fire.

However, even the Soviet artillery could not boast of having completely destroyed any of the heavy Romanian batteries remote from the front line.

Reports about this were given regularly, but then the "destroyed" batteries again revived.

Here is one of the typical reports filed by the 724th battery: "... starting from the battle on the border, the batteries destroyed 2 enemy batteries, 2 railway echelons with troops, a river tug, several boats with paratroopers, blew up a bridge, set fire to a military factory with shells, destroyed hundreds of soldiers and officers of the enemy. But the 724th turned out to be the only one of the stationary batteries that the Romanians once managed not only to suppress, but also to smoke out of their positions.

On July 5, the battery, which was exemplary (a leaflet "Take an example from the battery of Mikhail Spiridonov" was even issued on the flotilla), came under concentrated fire from several Romanian long-range batteries and, possibly, monitors at once.

Heavy shells fell in dozens. Spiridonov decided to withdraw the guns from the main position. At the same time, one of the guns remained in place to mislead the enemy. Oddly enough, it was possible to bring the tractor up and transport the guns without loss of materiel.

The gun of Sergeant Solyony, left for cover, was not damaged either. The abandonment of positions was considered justified, and on July 14, the battery commander st. Lieutenant Spiridonov and the commander of the firing platoon, Lieutenant Velichko, were awarded the Order of the Red Banner, and Sergeant Solyony was awarded the medal "For Courage".

Breakthrough of the Krinov group to Izmail

(July 8)

The situation in the lower reaches of the Danube did not undergo any special changes, but the general situation on the Southern Front after the start of Operation Munich on July 2 became more and more unfavorable: the enemy occupied the city of Balti and advanced on Chisinau. The Prut was forced in the Felchiul-Gyganka area, and the threat loomed over Bolgrad. The enemy bypassed the right flank of the 14th Corps, forcing its units to withdraw to the line of Lake Yalug.

On July 8, at the command post of the 14th SC, commander Egorov informed the flotilla chief of staff Grigoriev, who was urgently summoned there, about the withdrawal of corps units to the line of Lake Yalug, in order to avoid envelopment by the enemy advancing north. As a result, fleets

it was ordered that same night to withdraw all the ships located there from Lake Cahul to the Izmail region.

"They did their thing there, and now it's too risky to keep them in Cahul," Yegorov said and added:

"I am also responsible for your monitors ..."

The withdrawal of the ships of the Reni group meant not just a transition to Ishmael, but a breakthrough.

More than 40 kilometers of the route fell on the stretch, not covered by the right-bank bridgehead and shot through by Romanian batteries. It was not ruled out that an exit to intercept the two Romanian monitors remaining in the Sulina sleeve was possible - bright, moonlit nights completely allowed this.

There was very little time left to prepare for the transition.

After the transfer of the order to the Reni group at its parking lot in Lake Cahul, near the village of Etuliya, a meeting of ship commanders, deputy commanders for political affairs and secretaries of party organizations was held on the Zheleznyakov monitor.

The group commander, captain-lieutenant Krinov, reported on the order of the flotilla commander:

"I thank the commanders, political workers, foremen and sailors for heroism and courage in the fight against the Nazi invaders - the task that our group of ships faced was completed. Now she has a new task ahead of her: tonight the monitors Zheleznyakov, Zhemchuzhin and Rostovtsev, armored boats BKA-111, BKA-113, to break past the enemy's Isakchinsky fortified area to their main base - Izmail. Blow up the wrecked boat "BKA-112" that does not have a course.

A little later, they decided to blow up two boat minesweepers, which had too little speed to keep up with the group.

At 22.30, lined up in a column, the ships began to move. BKA 111 was sentinel, followed by Zheleznyakov, which was led by Krinov himself, replacing the ill commander, followed by Zhemchuzhin, Rostovtsev and the rest of the ships of the group.

Around midnight, the ships, moving at low speed, left the Vikete to the Danube.

The fighters of the 96th NF were already circling in the exit area. Its commander, Captain Korobitsyn, had an order that all the night-light pilots he had, replacing each other, continuously flew over the Danube, drowning out the work of ship machines with the noise of engines.

Monitor "Zheleznyakov" (from a painting by V.M. Ivanov).

Having entered the fairway, the ships reorganized into the order of movement: monitors in a column at intervals of two cables, armored boats, which had weaker armor, to the left of them, abeam the intervals, in order to stay away from the enemy coast and at the same time be able to fire simultaneously with monitors.

On the Danube, the ships began to descend by self-raftering.

The group had to go through 4 dangerous sections: Krapina, Isakchu, Sulinsky arm and Cape Chatal. And the further away these areas were from Ishmael, the less opportunity the flotilla command had to influence the situation.

The traverse of Lake Krapina was located slightly below the mouth of Viketa. During its passage along the Zheleznyakov, which was now leading the way, a four-gun battery unexpectedly opened fire, with the onset of darkness secretly advanced to the very edge of the water. The monitor immediately returned fire from all guns and machine guns, guided by flashes on the shore. The group developed maximum speed, fearing the blows of a floating battery located in the lake. Three minutes later the battery ceased fire. Arriving at the turning point, Zheleznyakov changed course and left the range of the battery. At this time, the battery resumed fire, this time at the Pearl, which was passing by it, and already with only two guns. The monitor also returned fire, and the battery fell silent again. When the trailer "Rostovtsev" passed by her, she no longer fired. The enemy did not have time to bring the floating battery into battle.

While the detachment was moving towards Isaccea, the enemy managed to figure out that a breakthrough was taking place, and numerous machine-gun crews opened fire along the entire length of the coastline. The servants of the open firing points of the ships were forced to take refuge in the superstructures.

The Isacci area had powerful firepower, which the artillery of the monitors could not suppress even with concentrated fire - there were 10 artillery batteries and the 38th infantry regiment.

As soon as the mosques that served as a landmark for the Isakchi fortress appeared, a signal was transmitted from Zheleznyakov:

"Keep to the right bank."

And the ships, leaving the fairway, began to approach the right, enemy bank, entering the dead zone for the Romanian artillery, located on a high bank and not having the opportunity to hit targets under the coast.

While the ships were moving along the coast, they were fired upon from machine guns and anti-tank rifles, which did not cause them much harm. When the coastal steeps were passed, smoke screens were installed on all monitors and boats. The detachment did not have the appropriate equipment, and the sailors threw smoke bombs overboard under machine-gun fire.

After setting up an improvised smoke screen, the ships ceased fire so as not to identify themselves, and left at maximum speed. All 10 batteries fired quickly with such intensity that at the FKP near Izmail, located at a distance of about 30 km, reflections from the volleys were clearly visible, which turned into a flickering continuous glow.

To reduce the likelihood of hits from such dense fire, the intervals in the column were doubled.

In general, the ships were saved only by the fact that the enemy did not have the skills to fire at high-speed targets covered with a smoke screen at night. In the darkness, the Romanian gunners did not understand that the smoke screen installed by checkers was always behind the ships, and therefore the vast majority of the shells, as noted on the ships, fell short.

If rare shells fell a dozen or two meters from a boat, showering it with fragments, the latter deviated from the course, performing an energetic maneuver, and there was no longer any need to adjust the aiming.

When approaching the Sulina branch, the Romanians took into account the mistakes made and changed tactics.

In the Sulinsky branch, the enemy had two monitors with advantageously located corrective posts, and in the Tulchi area, long-range stationary batteries.

Taking into account the difficulty of firing at the smoke screen, the Romanians, using a good correction system, when the ships approached, set up a fixed fire screen behind 4 cables to the head monitor by the forces of all the batteries that got here and both monitors.

The traverse of the Sulinsky arm was already within the reach of the 725th and 726th coastal batteries, although at the limit of their range, so all their guns, when the ships approached, began to hit the batteries near Tulcha, but without adjusting their fire

turned out to be ineffective.

In the Kislitskaya duct, the Udarny and Martynov monitors were in full readiness both for fire support and for going to the aid of Krinov's group, but, given that the breakthrough was successful, the command decided not to ENTER them into battle.

Assessing the density of the fire of the exposed curtain, Krinov realized that simply hiding behind the smoke, it would not be possible to slip through it without losses. By observing the explosions, it was found that volleys of batteries followed in 12-15 seconds. Therefore, all ships slowed down and began to approach the fire screen at the slowest speed. When the fragments from the explosions began to reach the ships, they abruptly switched the course to the fullest. As a result, the ships slipped through the barrage area

in between shots. The Romanians several times moved the fire barrier forward along the ships, but were not successful.

At Cape Chatal, the ships made a turn and entered the Kiliya arm. This place was also considered dangerous. On a swampy cape, the Romanians hid a wandering battery of anti-tank guns in the floodplains, damaging patrol boats, which more than once had to be dragged away in tow. After the battery managed to sink the BKA-114 on July 1 and damage the BKA-113, the battery was a constant headache for the command. They tried to suppress the battery with artillery fire and even capture it from the side of Satul-know, combing the floodplains, but the battery disappeared in time, and then opened fire again.

Fearing damage to the monitors, Abramov ordered to concentrate significant forces in this area. When the detachment approached, the armored boats were placed in the Kislitskaya channel with a smoke curtain, and the 725th battery, which worked along Tulcea, was redirected to Chatal. The fighters of the 96th squadron were still on duty in the air.

Anti-tank gun of the Romanians at the water's edge.

Due to the curtain placed in the channel, which began to be demolished towards the cape, the anti-tank battery was forced to open fire too early. The monitors on the move entered into a fire duel, the 725th battery immediately began to hit the cape, and fighters stormed the battery that found itself from the air.

The last dangerous section was also passed without loss.

Right at the gangway, Captain-Lieutenant Krinov reported to the commander of the flotilla that: "... the monitors broke through without damage and loss of people and are ready to perform any new tasks ..."

Further, however, it turned out that both boat minesweepers were destroyed without the sanction of the command, but the investigation established:

"A study of all the circumstances of the breakthrough of the Rhenian group convinced that an attempt to withdraw ships that were inferior in terms of maneuverability could cost the rest dearly. The way captain-lieutenant Krinov did with them was recognized as correct. Krinov took over the leadership of the monitor division, but was not included in the number of those awarded for the battles on the Danube.

The last attempt to expand the bridgehead

(July 9-11)

On July 9, the command of the 14th SC once again delighted the flotilla headquarters, reporting that parts of the corps were being withdrawn from the Danube, with the exception of a small cover on the bridgehead itself, and all responsibility for the defense of the 90-kilometer section from Reni to the mouth was assigned to the flotilla.

Beginning Corps Headquarters Colonel Rybalchenko said in a cheerful voice, calling the flotilla headquarters:

"Take defense, sailors," after which army intelligence warned that the enemy was concentrating up to 6 thousand people in the Tulcea area.

A variant of the armored boat pr. 1124 with two 76.2 mm Lender anti-aircraft guns.

On the now uncovered section of the coast from Izmail to Reni, it was decided to install machine guns on all existing SNiS posts and reinforce them, turning them into small strongholds, since all the posts had stereo tubes and established communications.

But at least some rifle units were needed to cover the batteries and patrol 20 kilometers of the coast, not covered by the right-bank bridgehead.

The rear services of the flotilla sent ashore everyone, without whom combat work was possible. The hastily mobilized Izmail fighter battalion - about 600 people - was transferred to the disposal of the flotilla. Some people gave way to the local administration of the NKVD. In total, together with the rear services of the flotilla and the semi-crew, about a thousand people turned out to be in the ranks, many of whom did not have weapons. All were rearmed with trophies from landings, confiscated hunting and converted training weapons. On July 10, with the permission of the fleet headquarters, the flotilla formed its own combined regiment. The head of the air defense section, Colonel Matveev, was appointed to command the regiment. Matveev formed units in a day, brought them to positions and organized combat control. The batteries of the anti-aircraft artillery division were arranged in a new way - with the expectation of firing not only at air targets. As a mobile

of the fire reserve of the composite regiment, the training battery available in the coastal defense sector was put into operation - four old three-inch horse-drawn guns.

Even after the withdrawal of the forces of the 14th SC, the enemy could not decide to force the Danube during the day.

Armored boats, as before, carried patrols at night. But now the monitors were displayed at night closer to the right bank, in order to provide the fastest and most effective support to the bridgehead if necessary.

The commander decided to move two monitors closer to the mouth, in order to block the enemy's stronghold in Periprava. There, opposite Vilkov, there was a stronghold with a garrison of several hundred soldiers and three batteries that shot through the entire reach. Because of them, it was very difficult for tugs and barges with cargo for the flotilla to enter the Danube from the sea. It was necessary to delay each caravan in Zhebriany until the Soviet batteries silenced the Romanian ones for at least a short time, and the armored boats diverted the fire of the unsuppressed guns by engaging in a firefight with them.

Three other monitors, led by "Shock", remained near Izmail, where the paratroopers occupied the most important positions protecting the base of the flotilla. One or two of them were on duty at night near Satul nou.

Armored boat after explosion and fire.

After the withdrawal of parts of the 14th SC, the flotilla did not even have a theoretical opportunity to capture Periprava, but Abramov decided to try to disable at least coastal batteries by landing a small landing force to destroy them.

To accomplish the task, a sabotage detachment was formed under the leadership of the head of the intelligence department of the headquarters, Senior Lieutenant Zaitsev. Zaitsev found a suitable landing site - just below Periprava, studied possible approaches to enemy batteries and selected 25 sailors and foremen to complete the task.

It was assumed that the assault groups of paratroopers, avoiding a battle with the main garrison of Periprava, would infiltrate the battery positions, disrupt command and control, and then blow up several guns. Two coastal batteries, two monitors and armored boats were supposed to support and cover the actions and withdrawal of the detachment,

opening fire on the signals of the commander of the landing. The landing itself was planned on the night of July 11, without artillery preparation, secretly.

The landing was prepared in a great hurry, the details of the operation remained unfinished even in the initial phases of the operation.

The estimated exit time was violated, and the ships left later than they should have, approaching the target, when the visibility on the river was already much higher than necessary. At the positions guarding the batteries, there were anti-tank guns that opened fire with armor-piercing sub-caliber shells. The light anti-tank guns of the Romanians managed to work out shooting at armored boats even on the experience of a nomadic battery on Cape Chatal. Their fire was accurate, the shells hit the engine rooms.

Two armored boats with landing forces, "BKA-113" and "BKA-134", lost their course before they could reach the shore.

After that, one of the boats was smashed by field artillery fire, and the other was set on fire.

18 sailors and paratroopers were killed and 20 wounded. It was not possible to remove the teams and paratroopers from the armored boats, the wounded had to swim to the Soviet coast. Not everyone was able to do this. Among the dead was Senior Lieutenant Zaitsev.

A second attempt to remove or weaken the enemy fire barrier at the mouth of the Danube in the same way, of course, was excluded. After an attempted raid, the Romanians immediately reinforced their garrison in Periprava.

The second foray of the Romanian monitors

(July 10-16)

With the withdrawal of units of the 14th SC, the nature of hostilities in the Danube Delta began to change, due to the shift in emphasis to the actions of river vessels. The flotilla tried to use its capabilities as much as possible, since the nature of the terrain contributed to this.

Three strike groups were created from monitors and armored boats, which, approaching the Romanian coast, destroyed its manpower and equipment with artillery and machine-gun fire.

The enemy, noticing the increased activity of armored boats and monitors, began to take retaliatory measures to combat them.

The summer flood continued, the water was high, and the Romanians, taking advantage of this, began to use mobile mortar installations on rafts and boats to fight the ships of the flotilla.

Mortarmen secretly sneaked up on a mortar shot in small groups, quickly made several volleys, changed their position and continued shelling again. This tactic proved to be effective. The crews of the ships began to suffer losses from fragments of enemy mines suddenly starting to burst. The raids of the Romanian mortars began to acquire a total character.

To counter the mobile mortars, it was decided to use a detachment of gliders.

Fighter groups on gliders without starting their engines, on oars, went into the reeds, carefully disguised themselves and, having found enemy boats with mortars, destroyed them with machine-gun fire. The gliders came out of ambush at maximum engine speeds.

The division of armored boats also created its own fighter group under the command of foreman of the 2nd article Kudritsky. Operating on boats, this group mainly hunted for rafts. All members of the group were armed only with automatic weapons: light machine guns, self-loading rifles and machine guns.

During the day, mortars were found in the floodplains. And with the onset of darkness, the boats quietly crept up to the rafts and destroyed them from a short distance with concentrated fire.

After a couple of days, the Romanians abandoned mortar terrorism, but the hype around the boats continued. Now the Romanians began to form strike groups on the model of Kudritsky's fighter boat group, which successfully operated against them, but more numerous and having, in addition to machine guns and machine guns, also anti-tank guns.

"BKA-221", carrying out patrol in tandem with "BKA-304", stumbled upon such a group in the Tulchinsky sleeve. The group of boats was towed by a self-propelled barge, which is why it was timely discovered by a paired patrol.

At night, secretly, without starting the engine, "BKA-304" entered the sleeve. By order of the commander, Lieutenant Sharonov, the sailor Shvetsov and the foreman of the 2nd article Uglov lowered the armored boat downstream at the mooring ends, silently approaching the minimum distance to the enemy in this way. The armored boat was camouflaged abeam a cluster of boats.

In the morning, through binoculars, within line of sight, a barge with boats was found standing near the shore. Some of the enemy boats were destroyed by rapid fire before

than the enemy understood where the shooting was coming from.

After this incident, the armored boats were again "rearmed": a large number of light machine guns were issued to them to repel possible capture attempts. This was not the end of the matter. With the light hand of political workers in the division, a movement was launched under the slogan "Komsomol member, it's your honor to know automatic weapons to perfection!"

It was decided that all minders, radio operators and helmsmen needed to master machine guns and, if necessary, replenish combat crews.

While the combined regiment of the flotilla lacked rifles, heavily armed crews of armored boats were preparing for a possible repulse of enemy landings.

On the morning of July 13, Izmail unexpectedly came under artillery fire from two Romanian monitors located in the Sulina arm. From the post of SNiS, the FKP reported:

"Artillery fire is carried out by two monitors that came out of the Sulinsky sleeve." However, the monitors were discovered late and the report was only minutes ahead of their opening fire. Izmail and the area where the two coastal batteries closest to it were located were shelled.

7

Romanian soldier, disguised for action in the floodplains.

Although the night had already passed, the flotilla command immediately suspected the worst, not excluding the possibility of some wider actions against the left bank or bridgehead, not excluding a concentrated attack on Ishmael.

However, activity from the side of the enemy has not yet been observed anywhere. The monitors, on the other hand, behaved cautiously: having entered the fairway, they moved down quite a bit and completely switched to a duel with the 726th and 725th coastal batteries. The firefight went on at great distances and without much success on both sides. Half an hour later, the monitors ceased fire and fled.

The exit of the Romanian monitors, most likely, was reconnaissance in battle and almost certainly had to be repeated, since they left with impunity. Several options for a possible battle were developed, using monitors from the Kislitskaya channel and using aviation.

By the morning of the next day, a network of remote correction posts was deployed in the floodplains in the area of the exit from the Sulinsky branch. But it so happened that the most needed was a spare spotter, who, in fact, was not even an artilleryman.

At the post "Razdelny", located almost opposite the place where the Sulinsky branch begins, the senior Red Navy sailor Yakov Polyakov served as a radio operator-observer. It was a career sailor who managed to become an excellent specialist. He had an excellent eye, thoroughly knew local landmarks, and was repeatedly included in the corps during exercises. Senior Lieutenant Molchanov, who headed the SNiS section, suggested that Polyakov be involved in adjusting the artillery fire.

The radio operator was instructed, supplied with a 6-PK radio for direct communication with the NP

Colonel Prosyantov, located on the NP of the 725th battery, was determined where he was on duty on an inflatable boat covered in reeds (and be ready, if necessary, to wade with a walkie-talkie to the very edge of the floodplains). They also provided cover - in floodplains, albeit on their own shore, it was necessary.

Gliders and semi-gliders were actively used in actions in shallow and hard-to-reach sections of rivers.

Romanian scouts in floodplains.

Polyakov, one might say, was lucky: being in the reeds, he managed to make out the Romanian monitors a few hundred meters away from him - they stopped on the fairway, held in place by cars. Polyakov announced the appearance of monitors by radio and reported that he was ready to adjust the fire of coastal batteries.

Having received his amendments after sighting shots, the batteries, despite the large firing distance, covered the target. One of the ships received two direct hits in the stern.

This did not mean that he was out of action - the armor of the former Austro-Hungarian "river dreadnoughts" was strong. But the monitor got, apparently, fairly. And the batteries intensified the fire, they were joined, having received target designation from Prosyantov, monitors that were in the Kisilitskaya channel. And the enemy, having stopped the shelling of Ishmael, retreated, hiding behind a smoke screen.

Before leaving, the monitors heavily machine-gunned the plavni on the left bank. It must have become clear to the Romanian or German officers that such accuracy of shooting from under Izmail, quite far from here, was not accidental. And the corps could hide nearby only in the floodplains.

Polyakov and the sailors covering him were not hit by enemy bullets. The enemy ships, putting up a smoke screen, went back to the Sulinsky branch. But

now artillery batteries from Tulcea and Chatal began to fire at the possible location of the spotters.

They decided to leave the spotter with cover in place in case the monitors returned. It is possible that one of the monitors turned out to be seriously damaged - the Romanian batteries were not too lazy to continue shelling the suspicious section of the floodplains until the evening.

And when it got dark, several dozen frontiers crossed on rafts from the Romanian coast and began combing the floodplains. The spotter with a cover group waded along the floodplains to the village of Novaya Nekrasovka. For exemplary adjustments, Polyakov was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. The next day, a real battle broke out over this area, so convenient for adjustment. The fighters of the assigned company knocked out the frontier from the floodplains for two days, while capturing several people. But the Romanian monitors did not appear on this site anymore.

It was impossible without solid defense on land, without searchlights, which the flotilla did not have, to completely stop the seepage from the right bank of small enemy groups (especially if they crossed the Danube at night in remote places in one or two boats, rowing silently with oars wrapped in burlap). But the enemy was convinced that the Soviet coast would be protected from larger invasions.

still protected, and things did not go beyond small raids, shelling of posts and searches for scouts. The Romanian territory, occupied as a result of landings, was also firmly held.

At night, the ships were dispersed so that the observation sectors from them overlapped each other. Thanks to the high water, it was possible to introduce two armored boats along a narrow channel into Lake Yalug, and there they also carried patrols, assisting the units of the 14th SC that had withdrawn to the border of the lake. But on the Danube the ships could no longer operate above Ishmael. And just between Ishmael and Reni, most often it was necessary to repulse enemy attempts to cling to the left bank.

If this happened far from the positions of coastal batteries, some of the guns turned into nomads. A horse-drawn battery - Matveev's mobile artillery reserve - more than once advanced to Kartal, where until recently the howitzers of the artillery battalion of the 51st SD were stationed. The machine-gun nests created at the posts of SNiS also helped out.

Summing up the results of the past combat day and preparing for tomorrow, the flotilla headquarters puzzled over how and with what to strengthen the vulnerable areas of defense. On the left flank, it was necessary to prevent the enemy from cutting off the flotilla from the sea. On the right - hold Reni. The units that covered the town at the mouth of the Prut were headed by the head of the organizational unit of the headquarters, Lieutenant Colonel Komarov. In some reports of those days, his unit is referred to as the combined regiment of Komarov. In fact, the flotilla had under Reni - except for the 724th battery and a machine-gun company - no more than a battalion.

The Romanian detachment moves through the canal.

They telegraphed from Sevastopol: "We can send up to a thousand Red Navy men if you find something to equip." At that time, the Black Sea Fleet did not have a stock of rifles. But the flotilla had nowhere to take them from, since all the captured ones had already gone into service with the units of Matveev and Komarov. As a result, the much-needed replenishment had to be abandoned.

The increased load also fell on the 96th squadron covering the flotilla. The pilots of Captain Korobitsyn lost count of their sorties in a day - sometimes for air combat, but more often for attack. And no one complained about the overload. However, an inspector of the naval air force, who visited the squadron, admitted that the personnel needed at least two days of respite, and another fighter squadron flew in from Odessa to replace it. And naval bombers continued, at the request of the flotilla, to strike at Tulcea, Isaccea and Periprava. The new head of the intelligence department, Captain Ossovsky, who was appointed to replace the deceased Zaitsev from the land border guards (he still wore his former uniform with a green cap), reported information about the continued concentration of enemy infantry with reinforcements on the right bank. The flotilla was preparing to defend Ishmael. In the regional committee of the party, Kuznetsov, discussed measures to strengthen the defense of the city, which provided for the use of all available forces and resources.

In general, in comparison with other sections of the rolled back front, the situation could be considered unchanged.

The CP of the 14th Corps was still in Bolgrad, General Yegorov remained the operational head of the flotilla. The position in which the flotilla, on its own, with only two rifle battalions on the right-bank bridgehead, held the Danube flank of the Southern Front, could not be maintained for a long time and was temporary, transitional. But to what transitional - no one knew.

Bridgehead evacuation

(July 16-18) The general situation on the Southern Front, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate steadily.

On July 16, the 35th SC did not hold Chisinau, giving it to the 4th Romanian army, and the 14th corps had to roll back after it, especially since the enemy's intention to attack Odessa was more and more clearly indicated.

The withdrawal of the 14th SC to the Dniester became inevitable, otherwise it could be cut off. The decision to withdraw the flotilla, which covered the retreat of the corps, was taken surprisingly quickly. Already in the evening of July 16, an order came from the military council of the Black Sea Fleet, ordering the flotilla, covering the withdrawal of units of the 14th Corps, to break into the Black Sea and go to Odessa. Mobile batteries of the coastal defense sector, like anti-aircraft gunners, were supposed to follow the same land.

Then the order was confirmed by the command of the 14th SC. A telegram came from Moscow from the People's Commissar of the Navy, which could be communicated to the personnel only after the order to withdraw was announced.

All night, the flotilla headquarters prepared a planned table for the collapse of the bridgehead and the subsequent breakthrough.

In the morning, the evacuation of the rear services on auxiliary watercraft began. The flagship of the flotilla, Bogomolov, and the head of the technical department, Munaev, provided the ships, especially monitors, with additional emergency equipment. River ships are not designed to sail on the sea. In the fortieth year, they were prepared for the transition from the Dnieper to the Danube for almost a month. Now it was necessary to at least stock up the beams, spacers for reinforcing the sides and bulkheads, material for sealing possible holes.

The intensive movement of ships down the Danube did not go unnoticed by the enemy. The Romanians stepped up hostilities, especially in the area of the village of Periprava. Soon, reports began to arrive from the reconnaissance of the flotilla about the preparation by the enemy of a landing force to capture the city of Vilkovo.

The commander of the flotilla made a decision: on the night of July 18, to transfer to the Vilkovo area on the monitor "Zheleznyakov" the 7th (attached) company of Kizelbashev, which served as the Marine Corps.

While the monitor was getting to Vilkovo, they managed to hold a Komsomol meeting on board on the topic: "Tell me how many enemies you killed, and we will tell you how much you love your Motherland."

In general, during the steadily deteriorating situation, the political departments of the flotilla units did not doze off, holding meetings under slogans like "Self-sacrifice is the highest valor of a Soviet soldier."

A tragicomic incident occurred with the pilot of the 96th nuclear facility covering the flotilla, Alexander Evstigneev.

During one of the battles, a seriously wounded pilot managed to bring a wrecked car to the airfield, land it, and then lost consciousness. While in the hospital, the wounded pilot wrote an application for admission to the party, in which he indicated: "I want to die a communist," after which the deputy squadron commander for political affairs

accused him of defeatism, it's good that the matter was hushed up.

Trophies captured by the Romanians during the offensive.

At night, Zheleznyakov approached the pier. The Marines quickly disembarked and took up trenches on the beach. The company commander, senior lieutenant Kizelbashev, and his deputy for political affairs, political instructor Feklin, checked the company position, organized the delivery of ammunition, and provided telephone communications.

At dawn on July 18, the Martynov and Zhemchuzhin monitors, a detachment of armored boats, coastal batteries No. 7 (from Vilkovo) and No. 717 (from Zhebriyan) opened powerful artillery fire on Periprava. The gunners were supported by SB bombers called from near Odessa. They bombed the enemy batteries, their fortified points and crossing facilities. After a preemptive fire raid, there were no attempts to land troops on the left bank of the Danube.

On the night of July 18, auxiliary vessels left the mouth of the Danube: the Bug command ship, the Kolkhoznik minelayer, the floating workshop, the floating base of the armored boat division, tugboats, with barges, on which equipment, ammunition, fuel, uniforms and food were loaded.

At dawn, the 18th armored boat of Senior Lieutenant Shulik, once again becoming minzags, blocked the Danube fairway near the mouth of the river Repida, a little higher than Izmail, with a barrage of 32 mines. The production was led by the flagship miner Issarev. Although it was not very dense (considering the size of the fairway), it was still an obstacle for enemy monitors, in case the enemy, having discovered the withdrawal of the flotilla, decided to pursue it.

The last mines were distributed among the armored boats for setting after the breakthrough.

Anti-aircraft calculation of sailors.

In the evening, the coastal FKP rolled up. The border guards, the NKVD department of the city administration and consolidated units had to move east by land (to the Dniester - in the battle formations of the 14th corps). The commander instructed the captain of the 2nd rank Frolikov to manage the march of the "land Danubians". Mobile batteries, provided with tractor traction, and machine gunners in motor vehicles were the last to leave. Until the ships left, they had to stay in place and fire as usual.

The command of the flotilla and the task force of the headquarters switched to the Udarny, which so far remained near Izmail. The ships were dispersed. Two monitors were in the lower reaches of the Danube.

From Izmail to the sea along the shipping course is less than 90 kilometers. But near the mouth was Periprava with batteries directed to the fairway. Even simply suppressing them without the support of the evacuated coastal artillery was no longer possible. The intention to withdraw the flotilla by the enemy was already understood, which was shown by his increased activity.

The only thing that could be done in this situation was to carry out a breakthrough faster than the enemy could expect. And this largely depended on whether it would be possible to quietly remove the landing units from the right bank. After the discovery by the Romanians of the evacuation of the bridgehead, an unexpected breakthrough became impossible.

The first half of the night of July 19 was allotted for the collapse of the bridgehead. After the withdrawal of units of the 14th SC, all the paratroopers who were on the right wing of the bridgehead - in Satul-nou, Pardin and on the adjacent islands, could take on board one detachment of armored boats capable of crossing the Danube in a matter of minutes. But a bridgehead is not a port, it is an enemy in front of it, and it is possible to withdraw without losses only if such a withdrawal goes unnoticed.

The leadership of the withdrawal of the paratroopers and the responsibility for ensuring that not a single soldier was left on the right bank were assigned to the captain of the 3rd rank Balakirev. The paratroopers were not warned about the withdrawal in advance. Commanders were given no more than an hour to assemble dispersed platoons and companies. The calculation was to evacuate the bridgehead "quietly", completely covertly. But in that extremely undesirable case, if it were necessary to cover the withdrawal of the landing by fire, Balakirev had two monitors at his disposal.

Methodical fire was conducted from the left bank in the usual mode. The armored boats, which took the paratroopers on board gradually and at different points, approached the right bank in such a way that it looked like maneuvering a night ship's patrol. The enemy did not alarm anywhere, everything seemed to go smoothly. But it really became clear that the bridgehead was really rolled up as planned, including below, at Kiliya-Veka, where the paratroopers were transported by the armored boats of another detachment along with the former border boats, it became finally clear only later, when Balakirev reported: all army units were without losses and without stragglers delivered to the points of concentration on the left bank.

All transferred from the Satul-nou peninsula, from the islands of Small and Big Daller, Tatar, from the village of Pardino, as well as the artillery batteries of the flotilla, were brought together in a group under the command of Captain 2nd Rank Frolikov. This group

moved to Akkerman and Odessa. Together with units of the 14th Rifle Corps, coastal battery No. 724 and the 17th machine-gun company that covered it retreated from Reni through Bolgrad.

Lieutenant Colonel Malets, reporting on the removal of the right-bank post of the SNiS, did not fail to mention that the cable was wound up and stretched across the Danube. The economic communications chief did not lose such values even in a difficult situation.

Breakthrough

(night of July 19)

While the landing was being removed from the bridgehead, the Udarny flagship monitor, on board which was the command of the flotilla and the operational group of the headquarters, accompanied by two armored boats, covering it for fidelity with themselves from fire from the right Romanian coast, slipped past Periprava at low speed and took refuge in Ochakovsky girl, waiting for the results of the impending breakthrough.

The fact that the enemy, having identified the flagship monitor, which had larger artillery and was visually easily distinguished from the rest even by an inexperienced observer, could prepare to prevent a breakthrough, Rear Admiral obviously did not care much.

The moonlit nights are over. After midnight it became, albeit briefly, really dark. This determined the breakthrough tactics: until the enemy discovered the ships, do not open fire. The artillery of the monitors was not able to independently suppress the batteries in the Periprava area. And even

the single surviving guns could inflict great damage on the flotilla: their positions were advantageous and well fortified, the Danube narrowed, and 300-400 meters remained to the fairway.

It was necessary to lead past these batteries, essentially dagger batteries, no less than one hundred and one pennants - so many ships totaled the flotilla by the end of the day on July 18, including gliders and command boats.

In accordance with the developed plan, the ships moved in several groups, so as not to create a continuous rumble of vehicles, and at large intervals within each, so as not to bring targets closer to the enemy.

The monitors of Zheleznyakov and Rostovtsev were ahead. On the approach to Periprava, diesels and engines were turned off, and the ships, held by the rudders on the fairway, were carried forward by the current. Everything on the decks froze, only the murmur of water overboard was heard. There was silence on the shore.

Group after group, silently, without a fight, two more monitors came out of the Kiliya gulf, many small ships. Fire was opened only on the ships of the last group, and even then with a delay. Covering the rearguard, a battery near Vilkov and monitors entered the battle, taking up positions in the Ochakovsky branch of the Danube delta. The armored boats that covered the end group started a fight and rushed under the very Romanian coast, putting up a smoke screen and conducting such intense artillery and machine-gun fire as they were capable of. The monitors that had passed Periprava also opened fire with their long-range guns. But the Romanian artillery developed the most intense fire.

In a couple of minutes, a covert and successful breakthrough turned into a fierce battle with rather dubious chances of success. About a dozen ships were seriously damaged and had losses in people.

Monitor "Shock".

Most unlucky "BKA-133". Like the rest of the armored boats, it was closest to the enemy than all other ships, desperately maneuvering and trying to suppress at least the anti-tank guns of the Romanians.

At a short distance, an armor-piercing high-explosive projectile of an anti-tank gun pierced the armor of the cabin and exploded inside. All who were there were killed or wounded. The armored boat stopped maneuvering for some time and immediately received a large-caliber projectile in the stern.

The steering control, the propeller shaft failed, the bottom of the hull was bent up by the blast wave. The fire ignited. The boat turned into a burning torch. The current carried him to the shore of the enemy, from where they fired continuously. With incredible efforts, the crew managed to put out the fire and send the boat that had lost its course towards the Soviet coast. Before the Romanian artillery finally finished him off with two more shells, he was able to go aground near the Soviet coast, which made it possible to save part of the crew and even remove the fireproof box with documents.

The end group of the flotilla was saved from complete defeat only by the fact that the Romanian artillery opened fire late. The armored boats, which were trailing, placed the remaining mines in the fairway.

The flotilla spent the next day in the Danube Delta. The ships spread out and camouflaged themselves in the reeds. The sea was a little stormy, and

was to prepare the ships for the upcoming campaign. The teams set up braces, reinforced the sides and propped up the bulkheads.

By the end of the day, the cruiser Comintern and two destroyers approached - to cover the flotilla at the crossing, if the destroyers and torpedo boats of the Romanian Naval Division suddenly appeared from Sulina.

In the evening, the ships began to weigh anchors in divisions and detachments. The gunboat from the Odessa base closed the movement, taking on board the dismantled guns of the last Danube battery.

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AND
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Monitor type "Zheleznyakov".

The excitement of the sea reached 3-4 points. Flat-bottomed river ships had a hard time. Pretty soon, semaphore reports began to come in about the bends in the hull steel, about the first cracks. The personnel stood in compartments in readiness to fight for the survivability of ships. Some had to be pumped out.

But to the people on the ships, after the endured mortal danger, all this seemed completely insignificant. It was said that on one of the armored boats, battered in the last battle near Periprava, a letter flag signal was raised: "No damn, we'll get there."

The passage through the turbulent sea was not easy: some monitors and boats received damage that they had not had in a month of fighting. But all the pennants brought out of the Danube reached the Odessa moorings by the morning of July 20.

At 9:00 16:00 in the morning, the ships of the flotilla began to moor at the wall of the Quarantine Harbor in Odessa. Immediately on the pier, Rear Admiral Abramov, who had descended from the Shock, in the presence of a member of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet, divisional commissar Kulakov, finally read out to the commanders of all the ships summoned to him the telegram of the people's commissar received on July 16. It said:

"The Danube flotilla acted bravely and resolutely, fully fulfilling the tasks assigned to it, showing excellent examples of combat work. I am sure that the glorious Danubians will continue to beat the enemy in the same way as they beat him on the Danube. Kuznetsov.

The Danube Flotilla as a Criterion of Viktor Suvorov's Reliability

In the 14th chapter of his book "Icebreaker", entitled "To Berlin itself", Viktor Suvorov (in the world Vladimir Bogdanovich Rezun) tries to use the Danube military flotilla as a criterion for strengthening the offensive power of the Red Army, offering to see if it was defensive.

I propose to do the same and also use the Danube military flotilla (DVF) as a criterion - a criterion for the reliability of the statements of Viktor Suvorov himself.

Let's start in order, that is, from the very beginning.

And Vladimir Bogdanovich begins with the statement that "the Danube military flotilla included about seventy combat river ships and boats."

Suvorov greatly exaggerates the number of warships in the flotilla.

In the "Note on the action plan of the troops of the Odessa Military District to cover the state border", according to the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 503874 dated May 6, 1941, the composition of the warships of the flotilla is given in 33 units, of which 5 are monitors, 22 are armored boats, 5 are boat minesweepers and 1 - minelayer.

Other warships that were on the Danube - a division of gliders and the 4th Black Sea detachment of border ships transferred to the flotilla at the beginning of the war, which included up to 30 different small-tonnage ships, were not considered by the cover plan due to the impossibility of using them as a tactical force in hostilities (they used only for security purposes and as auxiliary vessels). But Vladimir Bogdanovich examines and calculates them, from which his conclusions naturally diverge from the conclusions of the cover plan, which directly states that the Far Eastern Fleet is inferior to the Romanian flotilla opposing it "both quantitatively and especially qualitatively" and, therefore, as an offensive the tool cannot be used. What kind of offensive is there with the quantitative and qualitative superiority of the enemy.

Further in the text of Suvorov, one cannot actually skip a word, since not a single word in it corresponds to the truth.

"In the event of a defensive war, the entire Danube flotilla from the first moment of the war fell into a trap: there was nowhere to leave the Danube Delta - the Black Sea was behind."

At the same time, Suvorov simply forgets how the Danube Flotilla, in fact, ended up on the Danube. And she got there, having made in 1940 the transition from the Dnieper to the Danube by the same Black Sea. And in 1941, after the withdrawal of parts of the 14th Rifle Corps from the Danube, the flotilla moved to Odessa - also by the Black Sea, of course ...

At the same time, the necessary preparation for the sea crossing of river ships, which were not originally adapted for sailing by sea, was carried out in 1940 as planned within a month, and in 1941 even within two days.

"In a defensive war, the Danube military flotilla not only could not, due to the nature of its basing, solve defensive tasks, but defensive tasks could not arise here!"

In the "Note on the action plan of the troops of the Odessa Military District to cover the state border" in accordance with the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 503874 dated May 6, 1941, the task of the Far East Fleet, which according to the plan is included in the cover area No. 6, is: "together with units of the 14th SC 9 -th KD, 25th and 51st SD and 25th and 79th border detachments 1) in cooperation with the ground forces of RP No. 6, prohibit the free navigation of any enemy ships along the river. Danube;

2) to prevent forcing the pr-com r. Danube at the mouth of the river. Prut, the mouth of the Kiliya branch;

3) when penetrating pr-ka on the sowing. bank of the river Danube to assist the ground forces in the destruction of the broken pr-ka.

Let's go through the text:

"The Danube Delta is hundreds of lakes, these are impenetrable swamps and reeds covering hundreds of square kilometers. The enemy will not attack the Soviet Union through the Danube Delta!"

The enemy, of course, was not going to attack the interior of the Soviet Union from the Danube bridgehead,

But on the Danube there was a strategically important large river port of Izmail, through which active trade was carried out with all the Danubian states. The entire Soviet bank of the Danube was supplied through the port of Izmail. The Far East Fleet successfully held the Izmail port until the very withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Danube.

Further, Vladimir Bogdanovich writes that:

"there was only one option for the actions of the Danube flotilla - during the general offensive of the Red Army troops, to conduct military operations upstream the river."

That's just such an option for the Danube flotilla and was not.

In preparing the aforementioned plan for covering the OdVO by the flagship of the Danube Flotilla, Podkolzin prepared calculations for the battle of the flotilla monitors with the monitors of a potential enemy. And these calculations were disappointing. There was only a purely theoretical possibility of penetrating the armor of the Romanian monitors with our 100-mm shells - "when firing from a very short distance and when the shell meets the armor at a right angle."

The Far Eastern Fleet was not up to offensive actions. 5 monitors, which were the main striking force of the flotilla, were unable to withstand the battle with seven Romanian monitors.

During the fighting on the Danube, in the event of such a situation on June 27 and July 14, 1941, when the Romanian monitors entered the Soviet sections of the Danube, they were fought from long distances with the help of coastal artillery and aviation. And the Soviet monitors kept in closed positions, and their introduction into battle was envisaged only as a last resort, if all other methods of preventing the enemy's breakthrough were exhausted.

"In a defensive war, no one needs the Danube Flotilla and is doomed to immediate destruction in its open camps near the coast that is being shot through by the enemy."

The war itself proved the falsity of these assertions of Suvorov.

Vladimir Bogdanovich was mistaken about open parking lots. The only place open to shelling from the Romanian coast was the permanent base of the flotilla - the port of Izmail.

Even before the start of the war, at the end of the large detachment exercises of the Black Sea Fleet, due to the tension of the situation, which were held unusually early in 41, the flotilla was ordered to remain in operational readiness No. 2, which provided, in particular, for the dispersal of ships according to the operational plan

deployment.

Three monitors, part of the armored boats and minesweepers went up to the mouth of the Prut, in the Reni area. The Rhenian group of ships was considered by the command as the vanguard of the flotilla - it would immediately come into contact with the river enemy if he appeared from the direction of Galati.

Two other monitors, including the flagship Udarny, with the bulk of the armored boats and minesweepers, were hidden in the Kislitskaya channel, and the commander of the flotilla directly took control of this group. The rest of the armored boats went to the mouth of the Danube, to the area of Kiliya-nou and Vilkov. In Izmail, that is, in open parking lots, by June 21, not a single ship remained.

The closed parking lots in the canals were so reliable that they were used until the very end of hostilities.

Vladimir Bogdanovich complains that:

"there is nowhere to maneuver the flotilla."

For almost a month, while fighting was going on on the Danube, until July 19, 41, the flotilla continued to maneuver - as, indeed, did the Romanian river division that opposed it. Ships every 5-6 hours, and sometimes more often, changed their anchorages in the channels, sometimes in very short sections. So, the Reni group successfully maneuvered for 16 days on a 2-kilometer section of the Prut that seems to be completely unsuitable for this.

The ships also went directly to the Danube - for landings, mine laying and daily patrols. Moreover, the Romanians, who had a numerical superiority, did the same - this was explained by the specifics of the hostilities in the Danube theater, where long-range artillery was actively used on both sides.

"But in an offensive war, the Danube flotilla was mortally dangerous for Germany: as soon as it climbed 130 km upstream, the strategic bridge near Chernovada would be under fire from its guns, which meant that the supply of oil from Ploiesti to the port of Constanta was disrupted. Another two hundred kilometers upstream - and the entire German war machine will stop simply because German tanks, planes, warships will no longer receive fuel ... "

The mortal danger of the Danube flotilla, not only for Germany, but even for Romania, could only arise in the imagination of Vladimir Bogdanovich Rezun, who was superficially familiar with the peculiarities of the use of the Danube flotillas of both formations.

The fact is that the river flotilla, even including 7 such powerful and well-armored monitors (of Austrian origin and inherited by the Romanians from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire), like the Romanian, was not able to conduct isolated offensive operations in isolation from ground forces supporting it.

The ships of the Far Eastern Fleet could not withstand battles with the Romanian field and even anti-tank artillery, as happened during the raid on Periprava and during the breakthrough of the Reni group of ships under the command of Lieutenant Commander Krinov.

Break through 130 km upstream, going against the current and not even engaging in combat with

coastal batteries and successfully evading their fire, the ships could not even theoretically.

With the most optimistic forecasts for monitors that are not able to develop a speed above 7 knots against the current (with a maximum of 9), it would take at least 10 hours to overcome this distance. During this time, the Romanians would have managed to

set up a minefield of any required density (as Soviet armored boats repeatedly did during the battles on the Danube, acting as improvised minelayers).

And to clear the minefield, being in sight of the coast controlled by the enemy, the boat minesweepers at the disposal of the flotilla simply could not, since not only they, but also armored boats and monitors, as the experience of the war showed, were easily destroyed by the Romanian and German field artillery, if the ships were not able to slip past enemy positions. Thus, on August 11, 1941, the Zhemchuzhin monitor was disabled, which, having broken through the enemy barrage, returned and entered into battle with his field artillery.

Well, another 200 km upstream - this is already from the realm of pure fantasy. Moreover, we do not even consider the possibility of strikes by ground attack aircraft, from which 2 more monitors of the Far Eastern Fleet were lost. Practice shows that Soviet monitors were easily vulnerable even to 37mm projectiles. During the breakthrough of the flotilla from the Danube to the Black Sea on July 19, 1941, the left car of the Rostovtsev monitor was disabled by three 37-mm shells. With armored boats, things were even worse. Only during the fighting on the Danube, the fire of the Romanian anti-tank artillery destroyed 3 and damaged 2 more armored boats, although they rarely took part in the battles.

Further, Vladimir Bogdanovich begins to deal with mobile coastal batteries.

"An interesting detail: the Danube military flotilla included several mobile coastal batteries armed with 130 and 152 mm caliber guns. If the Soviet command really decided that someone would attack the USSR through the Danube Delta, then the coastal batteries should immediately be dug into the ground, and at the first opportunity, reinforced concrete caponiers should be built for them. But no one built caponiers, the guns were mobile and remained mobile. Yes, no one blew batteries into the ground and no one built caponiers. Because these batteries were not coastal. Vladimir Bogdanovich, as always, did not bother to study in detail the subject he writes about. As a result, he tritely confuses mobile batteries with coastal batteries that have mechanized traction. The Danube flotilla had both.

In total, she had 4 mobile batteries at her disposal, but ... two of them were armed with 45-mm guns and were anti-boat batteries. Two more were armed with the usual 3-inch guns, which are somewhat weak for aggression. Large-caliber coastal batteries - the 724th, 725th, as well as the 726th, created already during the war, had full traction, but they were not mobile and had both caponiers and gun yards.

"There was only one way to use their mobility and only one direction in which they could move: in offensive operations, mobile batteries accompany the flotilla, moving along the coast and supporting the warships with fire."

Large-caliber batteries that do not have fortified positions and are intended

exclusively for accompanying the fire of advancing ships, existed only in the imagination of Vladimir Bogdanovich. But the mobility of the guns

stationary batteries could be used for other purposes than the unrestrained movement forward.

Fur. traction, in addition to simply transporting guns, was also used in cases where it was necessary to quickly leave a position spotted by the enemy (as was done by the 724th battery), and for the tactics of wandering guns, that is, firing several shots followed by a change in position (used to simulate the presence of non-existent firing positions).

Further, Vladimir Bogdanovich proceeds to the "analysis" of military operations on the Danube, naturally, according to his own proprietary methodology.

"The word "war" meant for Soviet commanders not defense, but offensive. Having received a message about the beginning of the war, the Soviet commanders are completing the last preparations for the landing operation.

Yes, they were preparing for a landing on the Romanian coast even before the war, but we will leave the word "offensive" entirely on the conscience of Vladimir Bogdanovich. The landing on the territory of the enemy pursued, paradoxically as it sounds ... purely defensive purposes.

The fact is that the Romanian cape Satul-nou was only half a kilometer from Izmail. In good weather, without binoculars, one could see the building of the Romanian border commandant's office on it. The Romanians easily recorded everything that happened in the port of Izmail, the main base of the Danube flotilla. In the event of war, such a convenient observation sector turned into an equally convenient firing sector. The Izmail port was available for shelling not only from guns and mortars, but even from small arms.

In the event of the outbreak of hostilities, in order to preserve the base of the flotilla, it became necessary to land troops on the right bank, to occupy a fairly extensive bridgehead there, which necessarily included the area opposite Izmail. Then the Izmail port and the city itself would have been spared, at least, from shelling at close range. And the flotilla could deploy further hostilities. Therefore, immediately after relocating to the Danube, the command of the flotilla, having made the appropriate staff calculations, turned to the command of the 14th Rifle Corps, in whose operational subordination it was, with a proposal to organize a landing force in the event of the outbreak of hostilities in order to prohibit the shelling of Izmail from the opposite bank, offering for to include the corresponding item in the plan of priority actions in case of war, which was being prepared for submission to the district headquarters.

Preliminary calculations showed that few troops would be required to capture the bridgehead. On the adjacent section of the right bank, behind a ridge of hills, floodplains began stretching to the Sulinsky branch, capable of serving as a natural defense of the bridgehead, and several battalions could be enough to occupy the minimum necessary positions.

Now such actions would be called an operation to enforce peace, but Viktor Bogdanovich prefers to see them as signs of impending aggression. However, let's see how the proposals of the flotilla were regarded by that same notorious Soviet command, for which the word "war", according to Rezun, meant not defense, but an offensive ...

Here is the decision on this issue by the commander of the 14th SC, Major General Yegorov:

"I can understand how important this is for the flotilla. But where do you order to take these battalions, where to remove them from? In addition, the task assigned to the corps for the defense of Soviet territory does not provide for actions beyond its borders. But the opinions of the higher authorities.

Chief of Staff of the District, Major General Zakharov:

"Everything is correct, but there can be no talk of this yet."

The commander of the OdVO, Colonel General Cherevichenko, agreed with the opinion of his chief of staff, adding that "... if, with the outbreak of war, the flotilla is able to take such actions on its own, obviously no one will object."

This is how the command of the Odessa Military District was preparing for "offensive" operations on enemy territory.

However, the position taken by the command of the OdVO may be of interest to anyone, but not Vladimir Bogdanovich, who has now turned to the facts on the preparation of the operation:

"The actions of the Soviet naval commanders, as well as the command of the 14th Rifle Corps, whose divisions are concentrated in the area of the Danube Delta, and the command of the 79th NKVD border detachment, were planned in advance and carefully worked out."

However, these facts testify, as always, to only one thing - the complete unfamiliarity of Vladimir Bogdanovich with the development of the events he describes. The participation of the 79th border detachment in the operation to seize a section of the opposite bank was not even envisaged by the unapproved pre-war plans. Even after the start of the war, the command of the 14th SC refused to allocate forces for such a landing to the headquarters of the Far Eastern Fleet, and only the commander of the 79th PO, Lieutenant Colonel Grachev, agreed to allocate 200 people from the detachment and from the 1st Border Command to participate in the operation carried out by the forces of the flotilla, without any participation in the landing of units of the 14th SC and, in particular, of the 51st rifle division included in it. Which was agreed and approved by the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet at 23.35 on June 22, 1941.

Let's try to trace how the events developed by bringing their sequence, outlined by Vladimir Bogdanovich, into line with the real course of events.

"On June 25, 1941, warships of the Danube Flotilla, under the cover of coastal batteries and artillery of the rifle corps and divisions that make up it, land reconnaissance and sabotage units of the NKVD on the Romanian coast."

Vladimir Bogdanovich proudly refers to the same 79th border detachment and military personnel of the 1st border commandant's office as reconnaissance and sabotage units of the NKVD - other parts of the NKVD did not take part in the operation. Moreover, neither the border guards, nor the flotilla, nor the units of the 14th SC had any groups specially trained for covert operations on the adjacent Romanian territory. And when it became necessary to conduct reconnaissance of the landing sites and the first and second landings, it was necessary to assemble impromptu reconnaissance groups involving people from the local population who had experience

poaching and even "fighting" (shootouts with the police) in the floodplains, which constituted the main part of the future bridgehead.

That's all the reconnaissance and sabotage units secretly trained by the Soviet command for operations on Romanian territory. And this is not surprising - offensive actions are not planned, and units capable of providing them are not needed here.

We sorted out the saboteurs who started the landing along Rezun, let's see who continued it and how.

"They are followed by the landing of regiments of the 51st Rifle Division of the 14th Rifle Corps."

Vladimir Bogdanovich is wrong here too. The 51st division did not land in regiments. To understand this, it was enough to at least get acquainted with the "Chronicle of the military operations of the Danube military flotilla in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union in 1941 (June 22 - December 1, 1941)".

In total, three landing operations were carried out, the last of which ended in failure.

Neither in the first nor in the last part of the 14th SC (which included the 51st SD) did they take part in the landing. In the first operation, which was carried out on the night of June 24, Cape Satul-nou was occupied with the village of Pardina located on it.

After the capture of the cape in the morning, a telephone conversation took place with the commander of the 14th SC, Major General Yegorov, during which it was decided to allocate a battalion of the 287th rifle regiment to reinforce the landing, which was landed on the cape on the night of June 25.

The only regiment that took part in the operations was the 23rd Infantry Regiment of Captain Sirota, which was allocated to capture Kiliya Veke on June 26 by order of Divisional Commander Tsurulnikov:

"The operation to cross the Danube with the aim of capturing the enemy Kiliya-Veka and destroying the enemy fortified area there begins on June 26, 1941 at two in the morning. The landing commander is Captain Sirota, Lieutenant Commander Kubyshev is responsible for the landing of troops. Fire support is assigned to the regimental artillery of Captain Otyanov, to the coastal battery No. 65 and the artillery division of Captain Voloshin.

In the last operation to capture the settlement of Periprava, which was carried out on the night of July 11, units of the 51st SD also did not take part. But with Vladimir Bogdanovich, the regiment magically turns into regiments. However, this is not the most interesting.

"In the hands of the Soviet troops was a powerful bridgehead on the Romanian territory with a length of 70 km. The Danube flotilla is preparing for offensive operations upstream the Danube.

Here Vladimir Bogdanovich makes his most important mistake and puts himself in a simply ridiculous position. Carried away by the theory of offensive operations of the Danube Flotilla invented by him, Vladimir Bogdanovich finally ceases to notice how, in fact, hostilities are developing and how this "powerful bridgehead on Romanian territory with a length of 70 km" is growing.

And it grows ... in the opposite direction from the oil fields longed for by V. Suvorov: on June 24 Satul-nou was captured, on June 26 Kiliya-veke, on July 11 they tried to capture Periprava.

If Vladimir Bogdanovich had looked at the map at least once, he would have seen that the expansion of the bridgehead took place downstream, and not upstream of the Danube, towards the mouth of the Danube.

And this is understandable: the purpose of a series of landing operations was not to develop an offensive in the direction of the oil fields, but to liberate the right bank of the Danube from the enemy in the area from Izmail to its mouth, in order to ensure free supply of the flotilla and troops of the 14th SC from Odessa. That is, the actions of the flotilla with the beginning of the war served to solve all the same tasks of the pre-war plan for covering the border for security (which the enemy could not cross), but with somewhat different means than in the plan - with access to enemy territory for this.

Thus, having carefully read Vladimir Bogdanovich, it becomes clear that all the plans for the offensive operations of the Danube Flotilla were simply invented by him.

V. Suvorov is not interested in either the real ability of the Danube Flotilla to conduct combat operations up the Danube, or the real nature of the tasks it performed during combat operations. He doesn't even look at the map. Unfortunately, it turns out that everything he wrote about the Danube Flotilla, on closer examination, is related to alternative history (as one of the areas of non-science fiction), and not to real.

Instead of an afterword

The operations of the Danube Flotilla in the period from June 22 to July 19, 1941 were the most successful actions of the Soviet troops in the initial period of the war. At a time when continuous catastrophes of various scales occurred along the entire huge front, the coastal sector of the Southern Front turned out to be the only place where the enemy did not cross the state border for almost a month. Moreover, a 70-kilometer section of enemy territory was captured by Soviet troops. At that difficult time it had

colossal importance.

The very fact of capturing a bridgehead on the Danube made a strong impression even on the leadership of the Third Reich. Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary on June 28: "... in the south, on the Romanian front, a suspension, small wedges of Russians, partly on Romanian territory."

The Soviet government made the Danube success an event of national scale. After the announcement of the Sovinformburo of June 27, lists of those who distinguished themselves for mass awarding began to be prepared - an event that did not happen often in the first months of the war.

By the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of July 14, 1941, 45 participants in the Danube battles were awarded government awards. Among those awarded the Orders of the Red Banner were Rear Admiral Abramov, Captain Korobitsyn and two pilots of his squadron, Lieutenant Commander Kubyshev, commander

Major Sirota of the 23rd joint venture, his pns-1 lieutenant Ovcharov, secretary of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League of the 23rd joint venture Burov.

The country's leadership highly appreciated the merits of the grouping of Soviet troops on the Danube, which did not allow violations of the state border for a whole month of the war.

Of course, the Romanian troops were not going to seriously attack from the first days of the WAR.

The 3rd and 4th Romanian armies, which were part of the South Army Group, according to the Barbarossa plan, were to defend along the Prut, providing the southern flank of the main forces of the army group, which delivered the main blow in the Kiev direction. In the future, the German-Romanian formations should have advanced, preventing the "organized withdrawal of Soviet troops across the Dniester."

In accordance with the decision of the commander of Army Group South, Field Marshal Rundstedt, the troops in Romania, defending themselves, were in readiness for action according to two options. If the Soviet troops began to withdraw, the operation "Nakhshtoss" was envisaged in order to pursue the latter and prevent their systematic withdrawal across the Dniester. Operation Munich was planned in case the Soviet troops held the line along the Prut and the need arose to break through the defense. The 11th Army, with Romanian formations subordinate to it, was supposed to force the Prut in its upper reaches and advance to the northeast in the general direction of Mogilev-Podolsky - Vinnitsa to join the grouping that was delivering the main blow.

But the organized and thoughtful actions of the Soviet troops on the Danube were an unpleasant surprise for the Romanian command. The Central Naval Archive contains a curious analytical document compiled in August 1941 entitled "Conclusions and Lessons from the Operations Carried Out So Far in the War with the USSR." It was signed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Army, General Mazarin. Here is what he wrote:

"... The Soviet infantry puts up fierce resistance. The strength of the resistance of the Soviet infantry is the result of good training. Soviet artillery fires accurately. It must be emphasized that Russian offensive actions in the form of counterattacks were observed quite often.

... The Soviet fleet made good use of the river means at its disposal. In summary, let's say that the Red Army is a well-organized, equipped and trained army for war. Formations, units and subunits are led by skillful commanders.

The Danube sector of the front was indeed defended by units that had combat experience - the 51st and 25th rifle divisions. The knowledge and experience of the command of the 14th SC and the Danube River Flotilla was also enough for the successful conduct of hostilities without the massive use of aviation and armored vehicles.

Under such conditions, artillery acquired a decisive role. Fire raids and counter-battery combat were, in fact, the main type of combat operations on the Danube bridgehead.

Both sides took great care of their monitors, armed with large-caliber guns, which they quite succeeded in the conditions of sluggish hostilities.

After moving to Odessa, in the conditions of German air supremacy and high intensity of hostilities, 6 of the 7 monitors of the Danube Flotilla were lost within only two months.

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Scheme of combat operations of the Danube River Flotilla June 22 - July 19, 1941. The fighting on the Danube was worn by the standards of those deployed on the Soviet

The German battle front was extremely limited, but it gave the command the opportunity for careful preparation and planning of operations using all available capabilities.

And these opportunities were used to the maximum. The Danube Flotilla operated almost independently, with minimal support from ground forces.

The landings landed by it were entirely of a provisional nature and were undertaken mainly in the interests of the flotilla itself. The flotilla failed to completely take control of the right bank of the Danube along the entire length of the supply line.

But the holding of 70 kilometers of the coastline for several weeks was entirely the result of the competent actions of the flotilla, which energetically used all its warships, coastal artillery and cover aircraft to solve certain tasks dictated by the situation.

Each landing was carefully prepared with maximum consideration for the characteristics of the changing situation.

The forces of the opponents were almost equal on the Danube. The Romanians also had limited opportunities and tried to use them to the maximum. And of course, their actions are not like the behavior of the unorganized rabble, which they are presented in some modern publications. But the Soviet command, especially the leadership of the Danube Flotilla, directly

responsible for the defense of the bridgehead, managed to more effectively use the means at its disposal.

And in conclusion, about the losses incurred during the operation to capture and hold the bridgehead. It is unlikely that it will ever be possible to accurately establish the losses incurred

parts of the Danube Flotilla, the 51st SD and border guards during these battles. Of course, they were not as great as the losses suffered by the same units in subsequent battles, but still, obviously, not as small as it was claimed in the works of the Soviet period.

The fierce nature of the battles, which have not yet become part of our history, is evidenced by this note, found in 1958 at the battlefields on the bridgehead: "July 1941

They held on to the last drop of blood. Savinov group. For three days they held back the offensive of significant enemy forces, but as a result of fierce battles near Kiliya, three people remained in Captain Savinov's group: the captain, I, junior sergeant Ostanov, and soldier Omelkov. We will die, but we will not surrender. Blood for blood, death for death!"

Part two Landing near Grigorievka History of one operation Before the operation

(July 19 - September 4)

The retreat in the second half of July 1941 of the Soviet troops across the Dniester, their further retreat in early August, the breakthrough of the Nazi troops north of Tiraspol created a direct threat to the Odessa naval base from the land. On August 4, the People's Commissar of the Navy ordered the command of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) to organize its defense from the land direction, and the next day the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command ordered: "Do not surrender Odessa and defend it to the last opportunity, involving the Black Sea Fleet in the case."

On August 8, a state of siege was declared in Odessa, about which the commander of the Odessa naval base and concurrently the head of the Odessa garrison, Rear Admiral Zhukov, issued a rather remarkable order: "1. From 19.00 August 8 p. mountains Odessa with its surroundings is announced at the siege position.

2. Citizens without special passes issued by the chairmen of the district executive committees are prohibited from entering the city.

3. By changing the order on the garrison No. 21 of 4.08.41, the movement of citizens and all types of civil transport from 20.00 to 6.00 is prohibited. Returning from work and following official business during this period is allowed only with special passes issued by the commandant of the garrison.

4. For all sorts of sabotage attacks (shooting from attics, giving light signals, the operation of radio transmitters) are the responsibility of homeowners, house managers and janitors.

5. Those who violate my order will be held to the strictest liability under the laws of war.

Head of the Odessa garrison ZHUKOV

Commissar of the Odessa garrison

DITYATKOVSKY

Commandant of the Odessa garrison

PROTSENIUK

On August 19, the Odessa Defensive Region (OOR) was created, headed by Rear Admiral Zhukov. The area included the forces of the Odessa Naval Base and the Primorsky Army (the 25th and 95th Rifle Divisions, formerly part of the 9th Army, the 1st Cavalry Division and minor reinforcements). The commander of this army, Lieutenant General Safonov, was appointed, at the request of Zhukov, deputy commander of the OOR. In connection with the organization of the Odessa defensive region, some other personnel changes were also made. Major General Shishenin became the chief of staff of the OOR, Rear Admiral D.I. Kuleshov, and the chief of staff was Captain 1st Rank Derevianko.

The defense of Odessa from the sea was carried out by the 42nd and 44th separate coastal defense artillery battalions, which had 54 guns with a caliber from 203 to 45 mm. At the beginning of the war, a defensive minefield was placed on the near approaches to Odessa from the sea. The forces of the base carried out the service of the base patrol, conducted a search for submarines and aerial reconnaissance.

To support the ground forces, a separate detachment of ships of the North-Western region was formed.

From the air, Odessa was covered by anti-aircraft artillery of the fleet and the Primorsky Army, aviation of this army (about 20 aircraft) and a fighter aviation regiment of the Black Sea Fleet Air Force (40 aircraft).

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Scheme of the Odessa defensive region.

By August 19, three defensive lines were prepared near Odessa. The first was located 20-25 km from the city, the second - the main one - 15 km from Odessa, and the third - rear - was created almost at the city limits. The entire land defense front of Odessa was divided into three defensive sectors: eastern, western and southern.

The construction of defensive lines clearly lagged behind the development of the situation. The equipment of the forward line was completed in rough form only with the beginning of the defense, and its readiness for some types of work was within 40%. The removal of the forward line from Odessa ensured the impossibility of shelling the city and port with enemy divisional and corps artillery.

The 25th Rifle Division of the Primorsky Army took up defense on a front of about 25 km, the 95th - on a front of 20 km. There were 5-6 guns per 1 km of the front. Thanks to the use of coastal and naval artillery for land defense purposes, the density of the fire defense system in the most important areas was increased to 50 guns of medium and small caliber per 1 km of the front. All the artillery was commanded by one artillery chief - the commander of the artillery of the Odessa defensive region.

On August 13, the troops of the 4th Romanian army, allocated to capture Odessa, reached the Black Sea coast in the Sychavka region, thereby completing the coverage of the city from land. On August 15, they made the first attempt to attack Odessa in the direction of Sychavka and Buldinka, but it ended unsuccessfully. Three days later, the Romanian troops launched an offensive along the entire land front and in

As a result of three days of fierce fighting, by August 20 they reached the Karstal and Vygoda area.

On August 25, the Romanians forced parts of the eastern sector of the OOR to withdraw to the line Aleksandrovka - the northern outskirts of the Ilyichevka agricultural complex - the Ilyichevka state farm - 0.5 km south of mark 6.5.

In the future, the enemy managed to advance a little more, taking Gildendorf and Aleksandrovka on August 27. Long-range batteries of enemy corps and army artillery, installed in the areas of Chebanka, Fontanka, height 65.9 and Gildendorf, began to shell the city, port and approaches to the latter from the sea. In addition, by reaching the coast and setting up their batteries in the area between the Bolshoi and Maly Adzhalyk estuaries, the enemy was able to fire at the fairway, which ran 4-5 miles from the coast.

On September 2, in the eastern sector, the enemy used night attacks for the first time. Forces of the 421st Infantry Division (421st SD), formed from the military units of the Eastern Sector and replenished with 4,000 inhabitants of Odessa, the breakthrough area was closed. The division thwarted the enemy attack and in the morning destroyed small enemy groups that had infiltrated at night. Unsuccessful attacks were also made by the Romanians at the front of the 1st Naval Regiment.

However, the next night the attacks were repeated in all defense sectors. On the night of September 3, along the entire length of the front, the enemy groped for a weak link in the defense. In the Eastern sector, he attacked along the railway in the direction of Korsuntsy. The 421st division again repulsed the attacks, retaining its positions, and by the end of September 3, captured the village of Protopopovka. In the Western Sector, the enemy tried to break through the line of defense of the 95th Rifle Division (95th SD) at night. Repeatedly turning to a bayonet counterattack, parts of the division did not allow a breakthrough. In the southern sector, the enemy tried to attack with two regiments, delivering the main blow in the direction of Friedenthal and Dalnik, but was not successful.

During the day, almost without a break, the offensive continued in different sectors. All attacks were repulsed. But even on the night of September 4, the attacks were repeated in different directions. Aviation continuously dropped incendiary bombs on the city, and artillery shelled the city and port. Odessa was on fire in many places.

The front line would have been broken this time if it were not for the marching battalions quickly delivered from Sevastopol by ships: as soon as they arrived in Odessa, they were immediately sent by cars to the front line without waiting for darkness.

Operation planned

(September 5-15)

On the evening of September 5, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral Oktyabrsky, arrived in Odessa on the leader "Kharkov", accompanied by the destroyer "Dzerzhinsky". The leader and the destroyer brought weapons that were allocated for Odessa from the 51st Army on the orders of the Stavka: 5000 rifles, 150 heavy machine guns, 300 machine guns, 200 light machine guns, 100 82-mm and 20 120-mm mortars with three ammunition.

When the leader approached the port, the Romanian batteries opened fire, and the patrol boats that met the ships set up a smoke screen. At the vice admiral's ladder

met the commander of the Odessa naval base Rear Admiral Zhukov and a member of the Military Council (PMC) OOR Azarov.

Having accepted the report, Oktyabrsky noticed that the patrol boats were acting well, and immediately hinted to Zhukov about the consequences of the narrowing of the defensive perimeter: - Yes, it was hot from the "salute" ... How are you?

"As you can see," Zhukov replied with restraint.

"That the ships going to the port are being fired upon - I have just convinced myself of this," said the commander. Let's go to the command post!

At the meeting of the Military Council, assembled upon the arrival of the commander, the main question, of course, was the narrowing of the space of the defensive region. Reports were made by almost all members of the Military Council, starting from the beginning. headquarters of the OOR, Major General Shishenin. He reported that the 13th, 15th, 11th, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th and 21st infantry divisions of the enemy were operating on the OOR front. Intelligence data, testimonies of captured officers and soldiers confirm that in exchange for the killed and wounded, the enemy regularly receives reinforcements. The number of enemy troops and military equipment near Odessa is increasing, which is confirmed by daily continuous attacks, the intensity of air raids and artillery shelling of the city and port. And the OOR units do not have enough reserves, ammunition is not delivered in a timely manner.

Other members of the Military Council talked about measures to mobilize internal resources, about the work carried out by political agencies to increase the stability of the defense, but came to the conclusion that the lack of reserves put the defending troops in a difficult position and forced them to gradually withdraw. With the exception of the withdrawal from Odessa, everyone emphasized the urgent need for reserves.

The last speech was made by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the OER.

"- We understand the instructions of Marshal Shaposhnikov, made on behalf of

Stakes," Rear Admiral Zhukov said. "We violated the directive of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief by withdrawing from the main line of defense. But there was no other choice. Moreover, parts of the Eastern Sector again retreated four to eight kilometers between the Bolshoy Adzhalytsky and Khadzhibeevsky estuaries, although it is clear that a new narrowing of the defensive area is fraught with serious consequences ... "

No criticism followed from Vice-Admiral Oktyabrsky, on the contrary, he stated that the Military Council of the Fleet fully agreed with the report of the Armed Forces of the OOR, and agreed that there was only one way to protect the city, port and approach fairways from enemy artillery fire: for this it is necessary to push the enemy back to a distance that would not allow him to conduct actual fire on the city. Oktyabrsky also agreed that such a task could not be solved without reinforcing the defensive area with fresh forces. He assured that the Military Council of the Fleet would ask the People's Commissar and Headquarters to send a rifle division to Odessa.

The leaders of the defense of Odessa: Brigadier Commissar M.G. Kuznetsov, divisional commissar F.N. Voronin, divisional commissar I.I. Azarov, Lieutenant General G.P. Sofronov, Rear Admiral G.V. Zhukov, regimental commissar L.P. Bocharov and Brigadier Commissar A.G. Kolybanov.

He said that the People's Commissar of the Navy ordered the Black Sea Fleet to land a tactical assault near Novaya Dofinovka, strike at the rear of the enemy grouping in front of the Eastern sector of the Odessa defensive region and ensure the offensive of our units in a northerly direction, between Adzhalytsky and Kuyalnitsky estuaries. The landing force must be supported by strong artillery fire from ships and aircraft and preceded by thorough reconnaissance.

Zhukov expressed the general opinion of the Military Council, saying that such assistance from the fleet was welcome, but such an operation could not be carried out with the forces available in Odessa.

"- This task can be solved only if a personnel division is sent to Odessa. We understand the situation in the country, and yet we believe that the question of a personnel division for Odessa cannot be removed from the agenda. We ask the Naval War Council to support us in this..."

Oktyabrsky supported it, emphasizing, of course, that the issue of assigning a division to the Navy Armed Forces, with all the desire, does not solve, but fully supports the request of the Armed Forces of the OOR for help.

The next day, at the next meeting of the Supreme Council of the OOR, the next report of Major General Shishenin was heard.

"We have left Vakarzhany farm, in other sectors today the previous situation has been preserved, but in the troops there is fatigue from the continuous attacks of the enemy."

Summing up all that has been said, Zhukov concluded: "Our resistance is growing, but the onslaught of the enemy is not weakening either. Unfortunately, not only are we unable to restore the line of defense set by the Headquarters, but we cannot even push the enemy back so much that the port and the city are beyond artillery shelling.

And the VS OOR again telegraphed to Headquarters:

"Enemy batteries are intensively shelling Odessa. Over the past ten days

The OOR had only the wounded, placed in hospitals - 12 thousand ... Local human resources have been exhausted. Arriving marching battalions replenish only

decline. We have heavy losses of people, especially in the command staff. As a result, combat capability is reduced.

We have losses in military equipment. The available OOR forces are not able to push the enemy back from Odessa. To solve this problem - to push the enemy back and keep the city and port out of artillery shelling - a well-armed division is urgently needed.

The pressure of the enemy did not weaken, the Stavka did not promise anything concrete, and in the next telegram on September 10, the SC tactfully hinted to the Stavka what it should have done:

"New units of the 10th Infantry Division arrived at the front. Five-day battles to eliminate the breakthrough in the Lenintal area were unsuccessful. The enemy continues to fight in the direction of Dalnik. The situation is tense. A fully armed division is urgently needed to restore the situation. It is advisable to take it from the 51st Army to speed it up.

After that, the Bet's answer was not long in coming:

"DIRECTIVE OF THE STAFF OF THE VGK TO THE COMMANDER

BLACK SEA FLEET

ON MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE DEFENSE OF ODESSA

Copy: People's Commissar of the Navy

September 10, 1941 5:19 pm

Parts of the Odessa defensive region for more than three weeks successfully pin down up to twelve enemy divisions, inflicting significant losses on them.

However, the defense of the lines that directly cover Odessa from the northeast and southwest is not sufficiently stubborn. As a result, the enemy, having captured the Gildendorf and Lenintal regions, keeps Odessa under artillery fire, which significantly worsens the conditions for the defense of the region.

According to reports, the enemy is grouping large artillery forces for an offensive from the west on Odessa.

Necessary:

1. Organize two or three powerful air raids of the Black Sea Fleet, artillery of ships and BOs and, in cooperation with these means, set the troops the task of regaining lost positions in the Khut area. Vakarzhany, Freudenthal, Lenintal, destroying the enemy who had leaked in the direction of Dolnik.

2. To demand from the troops the utmost perseverance in the defense of every meter of space, daily strengthening and improving their positions.

3. To use all the possibilities of Odessa for the construction of strong ceilings made of metal, concrete, improvised materials at the forefront. To involve directly in the field defensive work all the forces of the population, the cadres of specialists from the fleet, the ground forces, and logistic institutions.

4. Replenish the loss in the command staff at the expense of all the resources of the region. Please let me know your orders.

B. SHAPOSHNIKOV

The Armed Forces thought for a long time about how to "return the lost positions", but, having no reserves at their disposal, naturally, they could not work out a real plan. However, the management of the OOR did not manage the available opportunities in the best way.

At the observation post near Odessa.

Instead of organizing a combined fire raid by the forces of naval aviation, fleet and coastal artillery, the Military Council, unable to organize the required offensive after this raid, decided to abandon it altogether, asking the Armed Forces of the Black Sea Fleet instead to launch an air strike ... on Bucharest, scattering leaflets with the headings " For long-suffering Odessa.

As PMC OOR Azarov later explained:

"We hoped that the retaliatory strikes against Bucharest would somehow influence the rulers of fascist Romania and force them to refrain from the barbaric destruction of the city and the killing of civilians."

Meanwhile, the enemy was developing an offensive on the Tendrovskaya combat sector, continuing to move towards Malye Kopani, Kelegey and Skadovsk; parts of the 9th Army retreated to the east.

The Tendrovskaya Spit was a strategic point, reliably covering the communications connecting Odessa with the Crimea and the Caucasus. The OOR Armed Forces, no longer having any opportunity to influence events, again turned to the fleet for help. The Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet sent the Danube military flotilla to support the Tendra combat sector. Kuznetsov, People's Commissar of the Navy, intervened in the matter and demanded that the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet hold Skadovsk and the Kinburn Spit to the last opportunity. The commander of the Black Sea Fleet accordingly ordered the commander of the Tendra combat site to prevent evacuation from the islands of Berezan and Pervomaisky, organizing their strong defense.

On September 12, Skadovsk was nevertheless abandoned, and the enemy concentrated up to five infantry divisions, a motorized mechanized division and two tank regiments on the Kakhovka bridgehead, preparing to go on the offensive in the Perekop and Melitopol directions.

But on September 12, the enemy continued to concentrate troops in the Lenintal region, during the day making attempts to expand the front and enter the Sukhoi Estuary region. As a result of the enemy's attack on the Oktyabr and Vazhny farms in the Western sector, the 245th and 161st rifle regiments withdrew.

In the southern sector, units of the 25th Rifle and 2nd Cavalry Divisions mostly held their positions, but the 31st Rifle Regiment was pushed back by the enemy. Enemy aircraft bombed and mined the port. 36 bombs were dropped. 121 people were killed, 162 were injured. 1394 people were taken to the hospital. for transport and

ships arrived to evacuate 1209 wounded. All the next day, the enemy tried to expand the front of the breakthrough in the sector of the 25th division in the direction of the southern

outskirts of Dalnik and Bulgarian farms.

Marine Corps officer.

As the onslaught of the enemy intensified, parts of the defensive area gradually lost their combat capability. In the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 90th rifle regiment, 57 people remained, in the 7th cavalry regiment - 300 people, in the 287th rifle regiment - 150-170 people.

The leadership of the OOR sought every conceivable and unthinkable opportunity to replenish the bloodless units.

To restore the knocked-out command personnel, 15-20-day courses for lieutenants were organized, at which military technicians, staff and administrative workers were trained. About 700 people from the headquarters and rear institutions of the Primorsky Army were sent to command positions in military units that fought at the front.

The entire population of Odessa, capable of carrying weapons and not engaged in the production of defense products, was hastily sent to military units. For these purposes, the Odessa regional military commissar was instructed to conduct a general mobilization of all able-bodied men under the age of 60 years. The called up contingents were to be formed into marching companies and battalions and, after a brief training, sent to the front. In addition, it was decided to additionally mobilize police officers, the NKVD and even fire brigades.

The mobilization of fire brigades with daily raids from 15 to 50 bombers on the city and 20-30 fires breaking out daily, of course, did more harm than good, but the Military Council of the OOR, in essence, had no choice - the front could be broken through at any moment. The telegram of the Military Council to the Headquarters, sent on September 13, resembled a cry for help:

"The enemy is receiving reinforcements. Throws up new divisions. Under the pressure of his superior forces, there is a danger of our units retreating to the lines

Gnilyakovo, Dalnik, Dry Estuary. The population, airfields, city, port, ships will suffer huge losses from enemy artillery fire. Our aviation will be forced to relocate to the Crimea. The 421st Rifle Division, created from local resources, has an insufficient number of machine guns and artillery. The remaining divisions also need to be replenished with machine guns and artillery. All rifle units have a 42% understaff of command personnel. The received marching battalions were poured into parts completely. For a month of defense, only the wounded lost 25 thousand. On September 12, only the wounded (accounted for in hospitals) lost 1900 people. To protect against a breakthrough and from artillery shelling of airfields, a city and a port, one rifle division is needed, as well as further replenishment with marching battalions.

Romanian mountain arrows.

The telegram again went unanswered. But it couldn't go on like this for long. A truly hopeless situation developed a day later, on September 15th.

From early morning, the enemy began a large-scale offensive in the direction of Vakarzhany - Dalnik with the help of three infantry divisions supported by tanks.

To avoid complete defeat, the 31st Rifle Regiment was ordered to withdraw from the Yuzefstal and Franzfeld area to the reserve to the village of Zastava. The 20th Cavalry Regiment was withdrawn to the line of the village of Klein-Libental and the heights adjacent to it. The entire territory west of the Dry Estuary was occupied by the enemy.

The situation deteriorated sharply. The units retreated to the line of the Dry Estuary, and the enemy got the opportunity to systematically shell Odessa not only from the northeast, but also from the southwest. An excellent reference point for enemy artillery shelling the port and ships entering the harbor could be the Vorontsov lighthouse, which stood on the pier at the entrance to the port. To leave the enemy without a reference point, the lighthouse was blown up before the end of the day. True, the artillery shelling of the port did not stop from this, but it became not targeted. The newly equipped Arcadian port and airfields for OOR aviation were also subjected to shelling.

Reports flew to Headquarters, the people's commissar and the commander of the Black Sea Fleet that the enemy had broken through to the west of the northern outskirts of the village of Dalnik and was accumulating forces for a further offensive southwest of it.

At 4:45 a.m., the Headquarters sent the famous Directive No. 001981 to Odessa, signed not only by Shaposhnikov, but also by Stalin:

RATE DIRECTIVE No. 001981

COMMANDER OF THE 51st ARMY

AND THE BLACK SEA FLEET

APPEAL TO THE DEFENDERS OF ODESSA

September 15, 1941 04:45

Pass on the request of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command to the fighters and commanders defending Odessa to hold out for 6-7 days, during which they will receive help in the form of aviation and armed reinforcements.

Receipt confirm.

I. STALIN

B. SHAPOSHNIKOV

However, the Stavka revised its opinion after only 2 hours. Already at 07:05 a division was found for transfer to Odessa:

RATE DIRECTIVE No. 001988

TO THE COMMANDER OF THE ODESSA DEFENSE

DISTRICT ABOUT TRANSFER

157th RIFLE DIVISION TO ODESSA

Copies: to the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, People's Commissar of the Navy September 15, 1941, 07:05

By the decision of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command to strengthen the Odessa

defensive area from today, September 15, the 157th division will be transported.

On behalf of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command

Chief of the General Staff

B. SHAPOSHNIKOV

The operation is delayed

(September 15-19)

After the decision of the Stavka to allocate a fresh division, the headquarters of the OOR immediately began planning the landing of a tactical assault, since the justification for the need to land in the area of Grigorievka, and not Novaya Dofinovka, as prescribed by the order of the people's commissar, was made even after the transfer of this order by Vice Admiral Oktyabrsky 5 September.

But the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet was somewhat ahead of the events.

Captain 1st Rank Zhukovsky, who arrived in Odessa on September 15, delivered the directive of the Military Council of the Fleet dated September 14 to the OOR Armed Forces. In it, the squadron of the Black Sea Fleet and the Odessa defensive region were tasked with: on the night of September 16, to ensure the landing on the left flank of the eastern enemy grouping of the 3rd Marine Regiment, which, with its strike, would facilitate the offensive of the OOR units in a northerly direction in the area between the Adzhalytsky and Kuyalnitsky estuaries. As a result, the complete destruction of the enemy grouping and the transfer of the front edge of the Eastern Defense Sector to the line Grigorievka - Meshchanka - Sverdlovo - Kubanka were expected.

The offensive of the Romanians still continued.

For these purposes, the Armed Forces of the Black Sea Fleet formed two detachments of ships: a landing detachment consisting of the cruiser Krasny Kavkaz and four destroyers - Boiky, Izuprechny, Dzerzhinsky and Frunze, and a support detachment consisting of a former icebreaker, and now an "auxiliary cruisers "Mikoyan", gunboats "Dniester" and "Red Georgia" and ten patrol boats.

At the headquarters of the OOR, they were somewhat dumbfounded: at a meeting of the Military Council, the commander of the fleet agreed that the offensive of the OOR troops could be carried out only if they were reinforced by a fresh division - and suddenly offered to attack before the transportation of the detached division from Novorossiysk had finally begun.

After discussing the directive and examining the available opportunities, the headquarters and the Military Council of the OOR came to the conclusion that it was by no means possible to conduct an offensive with the forces available to the OOR.

Parts of the defensive area are not even able to hold back the enemy and are forced to retreat in a number of places. The 421st Division, with five understrength battalions and daily losses, was unable to break the enemy's resistance and go on the offensive to link up with the landing force, as prescribed by the directive. The 13th and

15th Infantry Division, 32nd Infantry Regiment and parts of the cavalry division, as well as German batteries and other military units. The defeat of them by three battalions of the 3rd Naval Regiment seemed like a clear utopia.

Brigadier Commissar Azarov meets the new arrivals.

In order not to expand the circle of people privy to the plan of the command, and not to give food for rumors about the contradictions that arose between the military councils of the OOR and the Black Sea Fleet, it was decided to send a report to Sevastopol, Deputy Chief of Staff of the OOR, Captain 1st Rank Ivanov.

Ivanov had to offer to carry out the planned operation after the arrival of the 157th SD in Odessa, but even then not to carry the front line to Sverdlovo, Meshchanka and Kubanka, since this task is unrealistic, but to carry it only to such a distance that would exclude the shelling of the port and fairways.

In response, a notification came from Sevastopol that the landing operation was postponed for one day. This decision did not alleviate Zhukov's anxiety: until the 157th division arrived, it was impossible to count on the success of the operation, and the regiment that landed was clearly doomed to death. The OOR would not have been able to support him even purely symbolically, with minimal forces: on September 16, he had to transfer part of the troops from the Eastern Sector, where he was supposed to land, to eliminate the breakthrough in the Western and Southern sectors. On September 17, the OOR Armed Forces telegraphed to the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet:

"It is impossible to advance in the direction of Sverdlovo-Kubank with a clear superiority of the enemy. Five infantry battalions, one artillery regiment, few shells remained in the Odessa division... Tense battles are going on in the Western and Southern sectors. To repel enemy attacks, units of the Odessa division, sailors of the Odessa naval base and NKVD workers were thrown. We ask you to cancel the operation, send the 3rd regiment to Odessa immediately.

Reporting in this way, the Armed Forces, however, did not stop preparing for the landing operation, at the same time trying with all their might to delay it until the arrival of the 157th division. Arriving in Odessa, the head of the operational department of the fleet headquarters, captain 1st rank Zhukovsky, deputy head of the communications department, captain 2nd rank Gusev, flagship artillery officer of the fleet, captain 1st rank Rull and other commanders were intensively engaged in the development of the operation. The headquarters of the OOR actively conducted air, ground and sea reconnaissance.

The Air Force headquarters specified the enemy infantry, artillery and cavalry grouping in the Sverdlovo, Blagodarnoye, Kubanki, Gildendorf areas, the movement of his troops in the directions of Petrovskoye - Sverdlovo, Buyalyk station - Kremidovka station. The division headquarters conducted night searches to identify the numbering of the units operating in front of each connection, their changes, regroupings and engineering work.

Finally, units of the 157th Rifle Division began to arrive in Odessa. Together with her, 13 marching companies arrived to replenish the thinned parts of the front line, although this practice was contrary to the strict instructions of the Headquarters:

"The replenishment reserve should be intensively trained in close combat and fire training, and under no circumstances should the whole march battalions be brought into battle."

The battalions of Major Gamilagdashvili's 633rd Rifle Regiment arrived first.

The Marines had their own snipers and musicians.

Regimental commissar Karasev reported that in the first days of the war the regiment was replenished in Novorossiysk with mobilized cement plant workers who had already been well trained and differed little from regular Red Army soldiers.

Following the 633rd, the ships delivered to Odessa the 716th and 384th rifle regiments, an artillery regiment (24 76-mm horse-drawn guns) and the rear of the DIVISION.

The commander of the division Tomilov and the commissar of the division Romanov arrived on the training ship "Dnepr". From Tomilov's report it became clear that the 422nd heavy howitzer regiment attached to the division had been left in Novorossiysk and would not be sent to Odessa.

As soon as the regiments of the 157th division began to arrive, the OOR Armed Forces, taught by bitter experience, began active negotiations with the Headquarters in order to prevent its use in parts, and soon received the desired telegram from the Headquarters indicating: "Use the 1/57th Rifle Division on direction of the main blow, without dispersing it to solve secondary tasks.

At the same time, the Armed Forces urged the Headquarters and the General Staff to assign the 422nd Heavy Artillery Regiment to the 157th Division and send it to Odessa. The result of these requests exceeded all expectations of Zhukov, who was already accustomed to the fact that if the OOR was somehow replenished with people, then artillery did not arrive at all for the entire period of defense.

The 2nd cavalry and 421st rifle divisions formed in Odessa had no artillery at all, and the guns of the 25th and 95th divisions were already falling into disrepair. The enemy, on the other hand, had up to 80 guns per kilometer of the front, against 2.4 in the Eastern sector, 4.4 in the Western and Southern - 5.6 guns per kilometer.

As a result of negotiations and requests, two telegrams were received from the Stavka at once, in one it was reported that "the Guards division of the Eres arrived in Novorossiysk for Odessa" (48th separate mortar division), and in the other that "the 422nd howitzer artillery regiment will be loaded for shipment to Odessa". The head of the political department of the fleet, Bondarenko, who arrived in Odessa, brought some "clarity" to the orders of the Military Council of the Fleet regarding the preparation of the landing operation. It turned out that it was postponed until September 17 only because the 3rd Naval Regiment did not complete its formation at the time indicated to it, was not staffed with command personnel and did not have time to prepare for the landing.

The fighters were recruited both from the crews of ships and units, and from the storerooms arriving at the fleet. Special requirements were placed on commanders and political workers: people were needed who were able to quickly prepare subordinates for actions in enemy rear areas, in unfamiliar terrain. Plus, at night. For training, they took a section of the coast in the area of the Cossack Bay.

5 days were allotted for the preparation of ships and personnel for landing.

Landing standards were set taking into account the expected weather. It was decided to conduct another training session on the beam of the Chersonese lighthouse. The cruiser "Red Caucasus" tried to land paratroopers in longboats in a fresh wind, but did not meet any standards. Only a few fighters were able to dive on time.

A test landing of the entire regiment carried out there showed that the people were not yet sufficiently prepared, and the landing date had to be postponed. Difficulties also arose with the armament of the regiment - almost all the small arms available in the fleet had already been sent to Odessa. Machine guns paratroopers got German, from the captured trophies.

In terms of the number of fighters, the formed landing unit was far from corresponding to a normal regiment. There were 1,617 men in three rifle battalions and a mortar battalion. Of these, 180 were communists. Captain Koren was appointed commander of the regiment, and battalion commissar Slesarev from the political department of the fleet was appointed military commissar.

In addition, the command of the fleet was alarmed by Zhukov's urgent requests not to rush into the landing, reported by Captain 1st Rank Ivanov, which displeased Vice Admiral Oktyabrsky and a member of the Military Council Kulakov, who spoke rather unflatteringly about the OOR Armed Forces.

But a day later, the Armed Forces of the Black Sea Fleet also received a telegram confirming Ivanov's report with a statement that it was impossible to attack Sverdlovo-Kubanka with a clear superiority of the enemy. She forced the Military Council of the Fleet to weigh all the circumstances again and postpone the operation until September 21, when the 422nd Artillery Regiment was expected in Odessa.

The regiment arrived on 20 September with thirty-six 152mm howitzers and three rounds of ammunition for them. At the same time, a tank battalion attached to the division also arrived. The strength of the division after the transfer was 12,600 people, with 70 guns of various calibers.

Operation planned

(September 20)

On September 20, the Military Council of the OOR listened to the report of Lieutenant General Sofronov, who was in charge of preparing and conducting an offensive operation in the Eastern Sector.

Brigadier Commissar Kuznetsov and Regimental Commissar Bocharov reported on the party-political work carried out in the units. Everyone was looking forward to the offensive, although they were not yet privy to its plan.

Having approved the planned battle table developed by the Chief of Staff of the Primorsky Army, Colonel Krylov, on the same night, the OOR Armed Forces reported to the Fleet Military Council that the start of artillery preparation was scheduled for 7 hours 30 minutes, the attack - at 8 hours on September 22, and asked the fleet aviation to simultaneously bomb a blow to Gildendorf, Aleksandrovka and the Ilyichevka state farm.

In general, the planning table looked like this:

"September 21 - reconnaissance of the starting position for an attack on the front line of the enemy's defense; organization of interaction and command and control of troops;

September 22 at 1.30 - airborne landing;

at 3.00 - the beginning of the landing of amphibious assault;

at 4.00 - air strikes of the Black Sea Fleet on enemy reserves ...

at 0600, an attack on enemy airfields ... by aviation of the Primorsky Army;

at 7.00 - strikes of the Black Sea Fleet aviation on the second echelons of the enemy; at 7.30 to 8.00 - artillery preparation, from 8.00 - transition to the offensive of the 421st and 157th rifle divisions.

The decision to land was developed by the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet squadron under the leadership of Captain 1st Rank Andreev with the participation of the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the OOR Ivanov, who arrived in Sevastopol.

The plan of the operation provided that on the day of September 21 and on the night of September 22, fleet aviation would paralyze German aviation and disrupt the concentration of enemy forces by attacking airfields and concentrations of enemy troops in the Eastern Sector. 3rd

The naval regiment, under the cover of artillery fire from ships, will land on the embankment of the Adzhalyk estuary near the village of Grigorievka.

After the landing, the ships will transfer fire to the depth of the enemy's location. The 3rd Naval Regiment takes possession of Chebanka, Staraya and Novaya Dofinovka at dawn, consolidates and goes over to a long defense. The offensive of the regiment is supported by the fire of the ships at the request of the commanders of the units through the correction posts, landed simultaneously with the landing.

Taking advantage of the fact that the enemy's attention will be diverted by the landing battle on the other side of the Bolshoi Adzhalyk Estuary, the 421st and 157th rifle divisions, supported by the 37th and 38th batteries of the Odessa naval base, a tank detachment and ships, clear the entire space between Bolshoi Adzhalytsky and Kuyalnitsky estuaries, eventually mastering the line 1 kilometer southwest of Sverdlovo - Petrovsky farm - Shevchenko village.

Each of the divisions is directly involved in the counterattack with two regiments. One regiment from the 421st division remains on the defensive on the isthmus between the Kuyalnitsky and Khadzhibey estuaries, and one from the 157th division is withdrawn to the army reserve. The 422nd artillery regiment of the 157th division had not yet arrived in Odessa and could not be counted on. To the division's five light batteries, the OOR command added a division of the 134th howitzer regiment. His other division was placed at the disposal of the 421st division. Both divisions were supported by coastal batteries from the Southern Sector, the 421st was also supported by the ships of the Black Sea Fleet (but the 157th had a tank battalion).

Since dawn on September 22, OOR fighter aircraft have been supporting the landing force and covering ships from the air. A group of paratroopers is thrown behind enemy lines, which, by private sabotage and fire, disrupts his communications and combat command and creates panic.

The situation in the sectors of the Odessa defensive region on September 21 was favorable for the operation. In the Eastern Sector, the enemy showed no activity, but was preparing for an offensive. In the Western Sector during the day, he went on the attack three times, but was repulsed and suffered heavy losses. In the southern sector, he repeatedly tried to break through the Soviet defenses in the direction of the southern outskirts of Dalnik, but was unsuccessful.

The landing site was chosen as a narrow sandy beach, in the local "spill". A strip of fine, tightly packed sand, as it were, "spilled" between the sea and the estuary, forming an isthmus along which an "important

automobile communication" - highway Odessa - Kherson - Nikolaev. On the right and on the left, the "bay" was squeezed by rocks, in addition, the chosen place had one more drawback - extremely shallow depths. It was impossible to go directly to the shore even on a longboat.

A feature of many units of the Marine Corps of the Black Sea Fleet was good weapons and equipment.

Along with the infantry.

In view of the fact that the landing force was transferred from Sevastopol and had to travel about 200 miles, it was decided to use ships for its delivery that could make such a transition in a fairly short time. In addition, these ships had to have strong artillery, since the forces of the Odessa defensive region could not provide the necessary fire support in the battle for the landing.

In accordance with the concept of the cruiser, they were intended to transport troops and for their artillery support during the landing battle. The destroyers had the task of participating in the transportation of the landing force, and then providing fire support to the landing force during its mission on the shore.

A detachment of landing ships, which consisted of the cruisers Krasny Kavkaz and Krasny Krym and the destroyers Boikiy, Imperfect and Nezamozhnik, was intended to transfer the landing and ensure its combat operations during the landing and in the future.

For direct fire support of the landing operations, a fire support detachment was formed as part of the Kuban patrol ship and five MO boats that were in Odessa.

Rear Admiral Vladimirsky, commander of the squadron, was appointed the direct leader of the landing near Odessa - the commander of the landing, and brigade commissar Semin was appointed the military commissar of the landing - the military commissar of the squadron. The detachment of landing ships, which included two cruisers and three destroyers, was headed by the commander of the cruiser brigade, Kaperang Gorshkov, who did not yet know that he had just been awarded the rank of Rear Admiral. The commissar of the detachment was the regimental commissar Prokofiev.

In the landing area, the landing craft were to be joined by a detachment of landing craft from the Odessa base, consisting of the gunboat "Red Georgia", the tugboat "Alupka", 22 boats and 10 longboats. They were intended to speed up the transportation of paratroopers and their combat equipment to the shore. For the same purposes, the ships of the landing detachment had on board additional light boats and motor launches.

During the preparation of the ships, on the orders of Gorshkov, several additional launches from other cruisers were taken to the cruisers of the detachment. For each longboat and boat, loading rates were determined taking into account the expected weather.

Even when the landing was scheduled for September 16, Gorshkov held a tactical exercise with the commanders of the ships to study the situation in the area.

The air cover of the landing was assigned to the 63rd aviation brigade of the fleet, stationed at the Crimean airfields, and the aviation regiment of the Odessa defensive region.

In order to provide navigation support for the landing, by the time the ships of the landing forces approached at a certain point, it was planned to install a luminous buoy, in the area of which all three detachments of ships were to meet and line up in battle formation. To ensure the firing of naval artillery, corrective posts with radio stations were included in the first amphibious assault. Special training was conducted with the radio operators of these posts and the fire managers of the ships. In order to preserve the secrecy of the landing preparations in Sevastopol, a rumor spread that the 3rd Black Sea Marine Regiment was being prepared for transfer to Odessa. In the context of the time, this was quite plausible. The surprise of the operation was planned to be achieved due to the speed and secrecy of the transition from Sevastopol to the landing area.

The time of departure was fixed in such a way as to begin the landing at midnight on September 22. Thus, the plan of the battle provided for the solution of tasks by landing on the coast at night, although according to the views that existed at that time, it was recommended that the landing be carried out in the pre-dawn twilight, and the landing force should carry out the task during daylight hours. In this case, such a decision was due to the following considerations: landing at midnight made it possible to eliminate the use of aviation by the enemy at the beginning of the battle, increased the secrecy of the approach, was supposed to reduce the effectiveness of enemy fire on landing craft when they approached the coast, and complicated the tactical situation in the battle area for the enemy and command and control.

Operation delayed

(September 21)

On the evening of September 20, the 3rd Naval Regiment was concentrated in the suburbs of Sevastopol, in the area of Kazachya Bay.

On September 21, on September 21, the destroyer Frunze left Sevastopol for Odessa under the command of and. O. commander of the captain of the 3rd rank Eroshenko, having on board the commander of the squadron Rear Admiral Vladimirsky and a group of officers accompanying him, who were supposed to coordinate the actions of the landing craft and direct fire support detachments with the landing force detachment, as well as issues of interaction with ground units. Among them was a representative of the OOR command, the head of the operational department of the OOR headquarters, Kaperang Ivanov, who had with him operational documents for the landing. At 7 o'clock, the cruiser entered the Cossack Bay and anchored. For 1 hour 7 minutes, "Red Crimea" took on board 1109 people with weapons and ammunition and two correction posts.

According to peacetime norms, it was believed that the cruiser could accommodate no more than 500 people. But the war changed established ideas and broke stereotypes. With each subsequent operation of the Black Sea Fleet, the number of landings carried by cruisers constantly increased. During the Kerch-Feodosia operation, the cruiser was already transporting a regiment.

The cruiser "Red Caucasus" with troops on board. During the course of the war, cruisers had to carry many more paratroopers than was envisaged by the states.

"Red Caucasus" in 40 minutes took a battalion of 696 people. From the shore, paratroopers were delivered on ship launches - it was a kind of training in landing troops on watercraft.

In accordance with the plan, at 13:40 (according to some sources, 10 minutes earlier), the ships of the landing force detachment left Sevastopol and headed for Odessa; having a squadron speed of 18 knots. On the cruiser "Red Caucasus" was

the squadron's military commissar, brigade commissar Semin, who was supposed to organize an explanation to the sailors of the upcoming task at the transition.

The gunboat "Red Armenia" after the airstrike.

Only after the release, the personnel of the regiment and the crews of the ships were announced about the purpose and upcoming hostilities. The squadron's military commissar, Brigadier Commissar Semin, who was on the cruiser Krasny Krym, read out an appeal to the landing participants. It explained the combat mission, its role in the defense of Odessa and in the general course of the fight against the enemy on the Black Sea coast. Similar appeals were read out on other ships. Together with the landing party, political workers of the political department of the squadron went on the ships: the battalion commissar Pochupailo, senior political officers Malyshko and Makarov, political instructor Ereameev. They led the political work on the ships. Political workers, party Komsomol activists, agitators of ships and landing forces were distributed in advance prepared leaflets and appeals aimed at raising morale and developing the initiative of the personnel of ships and landing forces. Combat leaflets were issued in the units, rallies and meetings were held. Individual conversations were held with watchmen at combat posts. Ship agitators, sailors and foremen who were not on duty acquainted the paratroopers with weapons and military equipment, assured them that the sailors of the ships were ready to reliably support the actions of the paratroopers with artillery fire. It was believed that all this determines the high fighting spirit of the paratroopers and the personnel of the ships. Many of them applied for admission to the Communist Party that day before the fight.

The senior assistants to the commanders of the ships briefed the commanders of the landing units on the procedure for leaving the premises and approaching the gangways, boarding the floating craft, and on the actions to be taken when the ship received combat damage.

The destroyer Frunze.

It was also decided to take a very unconventional step and, given the expected transience of the actions of the landing troops, instead of dry rations, give the paratroopers an additional set of ammunition.

At the crossing at Frunze, at first everything went smoothly. But at about 15 o'clock at Tendra, the destroyer's signalers reported:

"We see the submerged gunboat" Red Armenia ", smoke, on the ship - nobody."

Soon people were seen floating on the water. The Frunze went towards them and lowered the boats. One of them picked up Serov's gunboats and delivered them on board.

From the information received, it turned out that the boat was attacked by enemy aircraft half an hour ago.

The OP-8 tugboat, which was nearby, was ordered by Rear Admiral Vladimirovsky to go to the gunboat and put out the fire.

There was a real danger that the bombers, having used up their ammunition, might, based on the flying time, be about to return and repeat the raid. Usually, when there is a risk of a bomber raid, destroyers are at medium or full speed, even if they are shelling the coast. However, the Frunze commander Eroshenko, who had previously commanded the Gashkent leader and replaced in this operation his former commander Bobrovnikov, who was wounded by a bomb fragment, and Rear Admiral Vladimirsky, despite the importance of the task assigned to them, stopped the destroyer and, together with the tug, were engaged in rescue of people.

At that moment, eight La-87 dive bombers appeared, heading towards "Red Armenia", apparently with the aim of finishing it off. Having found the destroyer, the Junkers changed course and turned to attack. Having abandoned the launched boat, the destroyer began to hastily develop the course.

But the outdated "Frunze" was not a high-speed ship, unlike the same "Tashkent", which was previously commanded by Eroshenko. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for unsuccessful maneuvering - the efficiency of performing the same evasions at speeds of 23 and 43 knots is still different, and Eroshenko had no experience in combat maneuvering with such a relatively slow-moving ship compared to the leader.

Having rebuilt in a chain and successively entering a steep dive, the bombers began to bomb the ship. And they bombed extremely well. First

bombs fell into the water near the bow. One of the bombs hit the forecastle. Its rupture tore off the visor of the navigation bridge, the ladder, disabled the intercoms and all instruments, the commissar of the ship Zolkin, the captain Ivanov were killed, the commander of the destroyer Eroshenko, who climbed at that moment to improve visibility on the rangefinder pedestal, was seriously wounded by shrapnel in the arm and stomach, easily Rear Admiral Vladimirsky and First Officer Nosov were wounded.

The Junkers concentrated their subsequent attacks on the stern.

Frunze are still alive. The cook of the destroyer Frunze G. Pronin poses with a ladle in one hand and a shell casing in the other.

The destroyer, continuing to fight and maneuver, steering from a spare command steering post, finally developed its maximum speed.

But here, a stern anti-aircraft gun was destroyed by a direct hit in the stern, and the barrage sharply weakened. The Junkers were able to bombard the stern without much interference, reducing the height of their bombing from 800 to 100 meters. The steering wheel jammed from damage to the tiller compartment. The ship began to describe the circulation.

It would not have been a problem to finish off the destroyer that had lost control, but at that moment the Junkers ran out of bombs. The dive-bombers left, leaving the Frunze in a difficult situation: water began to flow into the bow, the steering was broken, but the cars and boiler rooms were still in order. Driven by machines, the destroyer continued to move in the direction of the Tendrovskaya Spit. Vladimirsky, who took command of the ship, decided, in case he could not cope with the incoming water, to stick to the shallows, in order to later facilitate the rise of the ship.

Gunners of the destroyer "Frunze".

The machine telegraph was put out of action, and the machines had to be controlled by telephone and by voice through spaced people, which was quite difficult. From time to time there was confusion in the transmission of commands. In the end, Vladimirsky went down to the deck hatches in the engine room and began to command directly into the cars.

But the water continued to flow. At first, the roll was small, then it began to gradually increase. There was nothing to leave the ship. Some of the boats were broken during the bombing, and the rest were abandoned at the beginning of the raid, before they could be brought on board. Vladimirsky ordered that all bunks be taken out of the cockpits, cork mattresses unlaced and scattered over the deck: if the ship goes down, so that everyone has enough life-saving equipment ... This turned out to be not superfluous. Enemy aircraft did not appear again. The ship moved slowly but steadily towards the shore. The roll also grew.

Finally, forward movement stopped. The destroyer could already roll over. The engine crew and all personnel were ordered to leave the internal posts and go to the upper deck.

But, despite the large list - the entire starboard side was already in the water - the ship did not roll over and even stopped listing: it became clear that, having sunk on the starboard side, it leaned on the ground; that was what kept him. If the destroyer had been in such a position at a deeper place, it would have turned over long ago.

With the filling of the ship with water, the roll began to decrease. Superstructures and part of the port side deck, which formed a "horse" with the side, remained under water. Most of the sailors, using cork mattresses, swam near the ship; the wounded remained mainly on the rostra, and Vladimirsky was also there. When the destroyer landed on the ground, the roster tug "OP-8" approached him from behind and began to receive people. He picked up everyone - both those who sailed and those who remained on the superstructures. There was no one left on the water or on the ship.

The last to leave the ship were his seriously wounded captain Eroshenko, who did not want to evacuate with the wounded, and Rear Admiral Vladimirsky. The captain of the tug was ordered to go along the spit as close to the shore as possible so as not to run aground.

And at that moment the Junkers returned. The overloaded tug could not maneuver effectively. From the very first approach of the dive-bombers, the bomb hit the engine room and the tug went on board. Almost everyone who was in tow before the bombing swam to shore.

The board and superstructures, having taken a horizontal position, protruded from the water. They were left with eight or nine seriously wounded, unable to swim. Among them was Yeroshenko. A healthy sailor was responsible for each of the wounded. Vladimirsky also remained in tow.

Seeing that the tugboat sank, the "Junkers" began to unload from bombs and fire machine guns at those sailing to the shore.

Among those killed was the commander of the electromechanical warhead of the destroyer Zyzak. So that the enemy pilots did not see that there were still people in tow, the remaining people on it hid under the bulwark, perched on the walls

add-ons. And when the planes left, they got out from under the flagship. After 15-20 minutes, a torpedo boat arrived and delivered all the survivors to Tendra. On the morning of September 21, all members of the Military Council of the OOR went to units for

checking their readiness to attack. In the afternoon, Rear Admiral Zhukov began holding a meeting in order to eliminate the identified shortcomings in the preparation of the operation. The flagship gunner of the Black Sea Fleet, Captain 1st Rank Rull, reported that everything was ready to adjust the fire from the ships. The corps have been allocated and will be landed along with the troops. Some of the enemy's firing points were spotted. It was planned to deliver the negotiation tables by boats to the destroyers by the time they approached.

At 4:05 p.m., the communications officer on duty reported that, according to the received radiogram, an hour ago, the destroyer Frunze had been attacked by enemy aircraft and sunk abeam Tendra. Nothing about the fate of Rear Admiral Vladimirovsky known.

The received radiogram was sent from Tendra by the captain of the 2nd rank Melnikov at 16.05 to Sevastopol and Odessa. Melnikov reported that at 15 hours 7 minutes the destroyer "Frunze" was attacked by bombers 1-87 and sunk 90 cables from the lighthouse; A tug was sent to the place of death. The gunboat "Red Armenia" was also sunk; the commissar of the division Slavinsky died.

- How will the operation? Major General Shishenin asked.

- The ships with the landing force are already leaving Sevastopol. I think, - answered Zhukov, - that everything will remain in force ... Especially that which depends on us.

In the second radio message, which came from Tendra, it was reported that the OP-8 tug was also sunk, and the Gaifun tug was damaged by bombs.

- Will the ships with the landing force turn back? - asked the commander of the Primorsky Army, Lieutenant General Sofronov.

"I don't think they will turn," Zhukov objected.

The commander of the Black Sea Fleet, having received a radiogram about the death of the Frunze and having no information about Rear Admiral Vladimirovsky, ordered the captain Gorshkov to lead the operation. In a change to previous orders, he also ordered the cruisers to return to Sevastopol immediately after landing in order to break away from Tendra at dusk, and the destroyers to remain for fire support of the landing.

At 19 o'clock, another radio message from Tendra brought news: most of the personnel of the destroyer Frunze had been saved, Rear Admiral Vladimirovsky went to Odessa on a torpedo boat.

OOR commander Zhukov went to the port to personally meet Vladimirovsky. The commander of the base, Rear Admiral Kuleshov, was already there. He reported that a division of Eres had arrived on the Chapaev. Zhukov ordered to keep this division in the reserve of the Military Council.

Kuleshov was worried: by the time it was necessary to send the landing craft towards the ships with the landing force, but there were no instructions, so neither the meeting points nor other necessary instructions were known - they were brought from Sevastopol by Ivanov. Kuleshov hoped that he would arrive with Vladimirovsky.

At about 21.40, the roar of the engine was heard, and soon a boat approached the pier, from which Rear Admiral Vladimirovsky descended in a tunic thrown over fresh bandages.

After greeting Vladimirovsky, Zhukov asked:

— Where is our Ivanov?

— Killed on the first raid. Documentation is dead. Vladimirsky buttoned his tunic with difficulty.

For a while, silence reigned on the pier ...

- A group of patrol boats and the gunboat "Red Georgia" are waiting for a briefing, - Zhukov broke the silence. - The documentation, along with Ivanov, perished. Time is running out. We are late. What will be the instructions? Vladimirsky turned to Kuleshov.

"Remember, Ilya Danilovich," he began, "the Red Georgia, along with patrol boats, should be at the rendezvous point at twenty-four zero zero.

You must take the first throw and land the paratroopers on the shore... Suppress the enemy's firing points with the fire of your artillery. The canboat will serve as a guide for the longboats coming with the landing force... The boats will be on patrol, parts of the boats will follow with the "Red Georgia" - to receive the wounded and provide assistance to them. Inform the "Red Caucasus" that you are late.

At 9:50 p.m., the chief of staff of the base gave a notice to the cruiser "Red Caucasus" that the gunboat "Red Georgia" and a detachment of boats would be at the rendezvous point exactly at one o'clock.

Rear Admiral Vladimirsky went to the rendezvous point on a boat in order to take part in the leadership of the landing as soon as possible.

The landing squad slowed down so as not to reach the conditional point earlier than necessary. Exactly at the appointed time, he arrived at the place and became according to the disposition. The Red Georgia and the landing party were late.

At the approach point of the fairway, the landing ships were to be determined by the Tendra lighthouse. For a more accurate orientation, the Odessa base set up a buoy with a constant white light visible for three miles, and behind the outer edge of the base's minefield - a reinforced patrol of patrol and torpedo boats. Kaperang Gorshkov and Brigadier Commissar Semin, while still on the way, received a radiogram from the fleet commander that the destroyer Frunze had died, and the fate of Vladimirsky was unknown.

The cruiser "Red Caucasus" conducts night shelling of enemy positions.

The loss of a destroyer from a single raid by eight dive bombers made a strong impression on the command of the fleet. And despite the fact that at the crossing the ships of the landing group successfully and without any losses repelled an enemy air raid, setting up a "fiery hedgehog", which not a single Junkers ever overcame, it was decided immediately after the landing was made to recall the cruiser back to Sevastopol, so that they could pass the ill-fated Tendra while still under cover of darkness.

It was decided to carry out the fighting near Grigorievka according to the existing plan. Only one change was made to it - after the landing, the cruisers were to immediately return to Sevastopol. Three destroyers were left to provide fire assistance to the advance of the landing force in the Grigoryevka area. The command of the landing was entrusted to the commander of the cruiser brigade Gorshkov. Gorshkov feared for his brigade no less than the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet. Considering that the long-term maneuvering of the ships of the landing detachment on the bearing

Grigorievsky Cape will sooner or later lead to their discovery, captain Gorshkov decided to start the landing according to the plan, without waiting for the rest of the detachments to approach, and use ship launches and boats for the landing of the first throw. Without waiting for the arrival of "Red Georgia", he decided to launch the longboats and proceed with the landing in accordance with the approved disposition. The fact that in the absence of a detachment of landing craft, the landing time would increase several times and that all this increased time people would have to land under enemy fire, the captain of the 1st rank was not embarrassed.

At 01:21, a signal was sent to the ships of the landing detachment about the beginning of artillery preparation.

Operation begins

(1 hour 23 minutes - 5 hours 00 minutes September 22) In | hour 23 minutes cruisers opened fire on enemy positions. Having anchored 20-25 cables from the shore, they fired at previously identified

defensive objects of the Romanians. The ships fired illuminating projectiles, simultaneously starting to work on the shore.

A minute later, when the coast was already slightly "highlighted", the destroyers also joined them.

The shooting was carried out at the maximum pace, since the relatively short distance allowed this. Frequent fire was supposed to at least to some extent reduce the losses of the landing paratroopers. In a few minutes, the destroyers fired hundreds of shells.

Above the shore, flooding it with a trembling, iridescent light, dazzling balls hung "chandeliers" of illuminating shells. They slowly descended in parachutes, and in their place others appeared in bright flashes.

But the continuous flashes of gun salvos also well illuminated the sea in the landing area, throughout all 25 cables that still had to be passed ...

Disembarkation from boats in shallow water.

In | hour 30 minutes, an order was received from Kaperan Gorshkov to begin the landing.

At 01:35, the boats with motors were the first to leave the cruisers, followed by boats from the destroyers. A guide for them at the landing site was to be the lantern fire of the Red Georgia gunboat, which, having stuck close to the shore, was obliged to support the landing with fire.

But the gunboat was late, and the launches went to the shore on their own, focusing on the cruisers' lighting shells and the fires that broke out in Grigorievka.

So the main for the landing became watercraft, according to the plan considered as auxiliary. In 10 minutes of artillery preparation, its rather low effectiveness had already become clear, therefore, together with the first throw group, which was the company of the third battalion of Lieutenant Charupa, there were also correction posts from the cruisers and the destroyer Boyky on the longboats.

While the first landing group reached the shore, which took about half an hour, the ships placed a screen of fire on the flanks as best they could, and then along the front of the landing area. Rifle-machine-gun fire was fired at the approaching landing party, supported by anti-tank rifles, and Romanian mortars opened fire on the boats, which had a quieter move, from high-rises dominating the beach, which could not be suppressed in the dark.

Mounted in the bow of each longboat, heavy machine guns fired back. The paratroopers had their first dead and wounded. Around 2

o'clock in the morning, Rear Admiral Vladimirsky approached the cruisers on a patrol boat. By this time, the landing craft had come close to the landing site.

But when approaching the unexplored coast, the shortcomings of the selected landing site began to affect - at 100-150 meters from the coast, the longboats began to run aground.

In order to unload machine guns and other heavy weapons, the sailors, jumping into the water under fire, looked for areas more or less passable for longboats, along which they were manually dragged to the shore.

At that moment, the Romanians managed to press down the paratroopers with fire, in fact, they almost reached the shore. People died a few tens of meters from the shore, not being able to reach him knee-deep in water due to intense fire.

The calculation of the Romanian mortar is firing.

The motionless longboats became a convenient target for the Romanian mortars, and they immediately transferred their fire to them. At this moment, the paratroopers suffered significant losses from mortar fire. On one of the longboats, a machine-gun crew was completely destroyed by fragments of a mine that exploded nearby. The commander of the longboat, foreman of the 1st article, Boyko rushed to the machine gun and replaced the machine gunners.

At this critical moment, the landing craft commissar, senior political officer Yeremeev, ordered the cover group providing the landing to suppress enemy firing points on the shore by radio.

Sergeant Major Boyko and other machine gunners fired tracer bullets at the trenches. Machine guns often fell silent from close explosions of mines.

From one such gap, Sergeant Boyko received a shrapnel wound in the stomach. But, seeing that in order to suppress firing points it was necessary to mark targets, and machine-gun fire was not conducted on the trenches, he continued to mark enemy shelters with tracer bullets until he bled to death. Through the efforts of the spotters who were on the launches, it was possible to cover the trenches located behind the embankment. Several paratroopers with Lieutenant Charupa got ashore, under the cover of artillery fire, approached the Romanian trenches and threw grenades at them.

Gunboat "Red Georgia".

The greatly depleted third company was finally able to move ashore and attacked mortar positions located on a height behind the beach. Numerous casualties of sailors due to the lack of a gunboat and 5 boats

hunters, who were supposed to directly support the landing with fire, nevertheless turned out to be not in vain. The Romanians, who were under the fire of the paratroopers all the time, could not remove the marking plates from the minefield exposed in front of their positions. Unable to withstand the attack of the paratroopers, the Romanians withdrew to the village of Grigorievka located behind them. The landing site was captured. By this time, the longboats managed to return to the ships and again moved to the shore with the second batch of troops. In it were the commander of the third battalion, senior lieutenant Matvienko, and the military commissar of the battalion, political instructor Prokhorov. With the second batch, a mortar battery was also delivered to the shore.

When moving towards the shore, one of the last shots of the Romanian mortars was mortally wounded by the military commissar Prokhorov and Matvienko received a shrapnel wound. Like many paratroopers, the battalion commander, having made a dressing, remained in the ranks. Miners from his battalion began to remove the minefield.

At 02:40, the gunboat Red Georgia finally reached the landing site. The need for her fire support had already disappeared, and she, approaching the "Red Caucasus", took the remaining paratroopers from him.

Continuing to advance towards Grigorievka, Charupa's company came under heavy machine-gun and mortar fire. No longer having the strength to attack, Charupa left a small barrier in front of Grigorievka, and he himself, with the remnants of the company, began to bypass Grigorievka from the flank. After waiting for the moment when two companies gathered in front of Grigorievka, which Matvienko pulled up, Charupa unexpectedly hit the Romanians on the flank, starting a hand-to-hand fight. The 1st and 2nd companies of the battalion immediately supported him with an attack from the front, and the enemy was driven out of the village. During the attack, Matvienko received a second wound, this time from a grenade fragment.

By 5 o'clock in the morning the landing force was completely landed. Its landing, instead of an hour according to the planned table, took more than three without a belated detachment of landing craft. hours.

Without the fire support detachment, which was also late for the landing, according to official data, the loss of the landing force amounted to 332 people.

During the landing, the commissar of the 3rd battalion Prokhorov was mortally wounded and the commissar of the 1st battalion Prokofiev was killed on the spot.

After the cruisers disembarked, they immediately weighed anchors and headed back to Sevastopol in the dark.

airborne assault

Simultaneously with the landing from the sea, in the rear of the enemy between the village of Shitsli and the village of Buldynka from the aircraft TB-3 st. Lieutenant Gavrilov of the 18th Transport Squadron of the Black Sea Fleet, 23 parachutist sailors under the command of Sergeant Kuznetsov were dropped. The task of the landing force was to distract and disorganize actions in the near enemy rear, primarily the destruction of wire communications.

Shortly before the decision was made to land an assault, on the initiative of the Commissar of the Air Force of the Fleet, Brigadier Commissar Stepanenko, an emergency airborne group was created from the Red Navy and junior commanders of airfield services to disrupt communications in the enemy rear.

Despite the fact that preparations for such operations were carried out in just two

weeks by the fleet and some of the volunteer sailors selected for the operation had no jumping or combat experience, in general, the group was sufficiently prepared to carry out the assigned tasks.

Each sailor-paratrooper was armed with a Shll or PPD submachine gun or a self-loading rifle, as well as six grenades and a landing knife. To disrupt the wired communication, the paratroopers were additionally given the necessary small tools (cutters, knives, cats).

From the air, the descending paratroopers had a good view of the amphibious landing site.

Even from a height, in the reflections of volleys of guns, the coastline was clearly visible. Therefore, after landing, all paratroopers were able to orient themselves on the terrain.

The paratroopers were not detected in the air by the enemy. After landing, having no difficulty in determining the direction even in the dark, the paratroopers began to move in the direction of the landing site of the 3rd Marine Regiment, as was planned.

Most of the paratroopers were unlucky to the young sailor Korolev. Incorrectly secured equipment, including an unmoored machine gun, hit him in the face during a jump. Korolev lost consciousness and woke up already on the ground. Korolyov had a severe concussion, and his whole face was bruised from a blow to a machine gun. A lot of time had passed, it had already brightened up, the landing battalions were already advancing towards both Dofinovka, when Korolev, lying unconscious, was discovered by two Romanian soldiers who had fled from Grigorievka.

From the warning shout of "sailor" Korolev came to his senses and grabbed his machine gun. One of the Romanians was confused and rushed to run, not noticing that a disk had fallen out of the thrown machine gun. The second soldier rushed to the paratrooper,

trying to stab him with a bayonet. Korolev intercepted the rifle and was able to bend the Romanian under him. But the seriously wounded sailor failed to grab the dagger from the scabbard. Then Korolev tried to beat the Romanian with a grenade, which, as it turned out later, was cocked. After the fourth blow, the Romanians took away the grenade and, knocking Korolev down with one blow, grabbed his machine gun and disc and ran. Korolev, who did not lose consciousness, grabbed the rifle thrown by the Romanian and only after that realized that it was empty of cartridges. Then the paratrooper threw a grenade after the Romanian. The grenade exploded too far from the Romanian, but close to the Queen, wounding him in the leg with shrapnel. Korolev heard from close shooting that the battle was already going on somewhere nearby, and he understood that the Romanians were retreating. The fear of going out to his own without weapons, not taking part in the hostilities, forced him to catch up with the Romanians, despite the wounds. Having caught up, Korolev hit him on the head with the butt of a rifle, but again there was not enough strength. At that moment, some rider began to approach the Romanian and the sailor, who were taking away each other's rifle. Since only Romanian cavalymen could be here, the soldier, removing one hand from the rifle, began to wave, calling for help. Korolev also freed one hand and took out another grenade, about to throw it at his feet and blow himself up with both enemies.

Detachment of sailors-paratroopers.

Subsequently, Korolev told Sobolev, a Pravda correspondent, about this: "We are standing and waiting. I keep looking at the fascist: I think if he wouldn't have stunned me with his free hand... Then they'll take me alive, how much I needed: if I give it once, it will completely darken my eyes. And his expression suddenly changed -

rolled his eyes, opened the box and looked over my shoulder. I turned around - the rider was already nearby ... I looked, - honest mother! - Well, this is Korovnikov from the first battalion! Rides towards us at full throttle, and the ribbons curl. The soldier threw my machine gun - and tick! Korovnikov put him on the move with one shot - and to me ... But I don't have any skills or strength: they ran out ... "

It turned out that the political instructor of one of the landed naval battalions, examining the area through binoculars, saw two fighting people on the high-rise.

"- What the hell? he said incredulously. - Come on, look at the sniper scope, it's stronger: there's no way there is a sailor of the French struggle against the fascist
is doing."

In the sight, they considered that it was really a sailor. The sniper passed on all the details of this fight to the curious, waiting for the moment when it would be safe for Korolev to shoot at the soldier. But the political instructor had already given orders: the sailor Korovnikov jumped on a trophy horse and very opportunely arrived to help the Queen.

The conversation with Korolyov was subsequently put by Sobolev as the basis of his story "Duel", which in general corresponded to reality, in contrast to Sobolev's other story about the episode of this landing - "The Battalion of Four".

In the "Battalion of Four" paratrooper Negreba, who blew up the Romanian command post equipped in the cellar, throwing a grenade into the ventilation vent, stumbles upon the wounded paratrooper Leontiev, who is shooting back from the Romanians, and, having fought back together, they then meet two more paratroopers: Perepelitsa and Kotikov. The four sailors fight off a dozen Romanians and find another parachutist - Litovchenko. After that, all five sailors endure a stubborn battle with the retreating Romanians and six German submachine gunners supporting them, beat off two attacks and, at the end of the story, beat off "an avalanche of Romanians that rolled towards the beam."

In reality, events developed somewhat differently.

Landing near the shore of the estuary, Litovchenko began to move towards the landing troops. After dawn, the paratrooper discovered a firing point and, bypassing it, stumbled upon another paratrooper - Kotikov. Together they stumbled upon two Romanian signalmen, but did not attack, so as not to reveal themselves ahead of time. Half an hour later they met Perepelitsa, Leontiev, Lukyanenko, Reznikov and Khrulenko. Seven of the paratroopers attacked several enemy soldiers and, meeting no resistance from them, captured them, hid their weapons and led them in the direction of the approaching sounds of battle near Grigorievka.

Leading the prisoners, the paratroopers, obviously, considered their task to be completed and, being in a good mood ("... let's go, laugh, hurry up the prisoners ..."), not only did they no longer look for a meeting with the enemy, but also not too carefully watched the area. As a result, the Romanians discovered the paratroopers, set up an ambush, suddenly opened fire and began to throw grenades at them.

Khrulenko and Reznikov were killed on the spot. Leontiev received multiple shrapnel wounds to the chest and abdomen. Litovchenko was wounded by shrapnel in the leg. However, the sailors, who had behaved rather carelessly before, showed amazing courage at the time of the attack. They did not even lie down, but rushed at the enemy, who was at a grenade throw distance, and, using

superiority in automatic weapons over the Romanians, who had rifles, opened heavy fire from machine guns. During the rapprochement with the enemy, Kotikov received a bullet in the cheek, and Perepelitsa received two bullets from a light machine gun in the thigh. However, the paratroopers did not pay attention to their own wounds, but fired continuously, continuing to approach the enemy. As a result, part of the Romanian soldiers were killed, the rest fled. The prisoners, taking advantage of the battle, behaved differently - some fled, and three attacked the straggler

from the rest due to a shrapnel wound in Litovchenko's leg. Kotikov ran to help Litovchenko and managed to destroy the Romanians before they could take possession of the weapon.

At that moment, Negreba appeared, coming out to the sounds of a gunfight. He said that he cut the telephone wire at night and blew up the command post, which he accidentally stumbled upon (this episode is described in detail and quite plausibly by Sobolev).

The sailors were going to continue to go out to their own, but Leontiev could not go and asked him to leave. They put him in a funnel, gave him six more grenades and, having advised him not to let anyone near him, they decided to go in search of stretcher.

But, having passed quite a bit, the paratroopers began to stumble upon the Romanians retreating in their direction. Realizing that they would inevitably be discovered soon, the paratroopers took up a convenient position, entrenched themselves on it and periodically opened fire if the Romanians accidentally came too close. As Litovchenko later pointed out in his explanations: "They didn't go for rapprochement, and we couldn't pursue them: almost everyone was wounded."

Throw at the enemy.

In this way, the paratroopers held out until dusk, sensitively listening for shooting behind them, where the wounded Leontiev was waiting for a stretcher ...

However, Leontiev, despite being injured, also managed to correctly navigate the situation. He heard well the periodic rare shooting in the direction where the sailors had gone, and understood that they obviously could not move further, but they were not fighting a fierce battle either.

Therefore, after waiting for dusk, Leontiev decided that the best thing in his position would be to crawl to his comrades, who, after dark, might well continue to look for a stretcher ...

Somehow, Leontiev managed to get to the paratroopers before complete darkness. As Litovchenko said: "Leontiev crawled in at dusk. We were surprised. "It became easier for me," he said, "but it's hard to stay alone at night. All the time I heard a firefight in the direction you left, and decided to get to you. We were glad that he came."

With the onset of darkness, after it became clear that the enemy had left, the paratroopers, without any stretcher, brought Leontiev to the nearest village.

Now the paratroopers did not lose their vigilance, and until the morning Negreba, Perepelitsa and Kotikov, replacing each other, guarded the possible return of the Romanians. At dawn, two village children ran up to Litovchenko and said that wounded Romanian soldiers and weapons were hiding in haystacks outside the village,

seems not. After combing the haystacks arranged by the paratroopers, the prisoners again appeared in the group. This time, the trophies were two wounded officers and six frozen soldiers, who, on the morning of September 23, were delivered by paratroopers to the location of the battalions of the 3rd Marine Regiment.

Some paratroopers, not finding comrades, acted alone. Grigory Eliseev, having not met his comrades, did not waste time looking for them, but, perhaps more than anyone else, concentrated on performing the immediate tasks of the landing.

At first, he could not find a single wire for a long time, but then he realized where the Romanians were laying a connection, and he began not only to cut the wires, but to cut them in whole pieces and wind them around himself. As he later explained, he did so, "bearing that if you cut them off and leave them, the signalmen might grow together." As the paratroopers who met him later said: "He turned into a" telecoil ". " However, the wires did not prevent Eliseev from continuing to commit sabotage. Having met two Romanian carts on the road (completely similar to ours during the Civil War), Eliseev threw grenades at them. One cart fell off the road, the second managed to escape.

But Eliseev still had unused grenades, and he continued to look for meetings with the enemy.

Approaching the village of Shitsli, in the area of \u200b\u200bwhich the landing force was thrown out, Eliseev, through the backyards in broad daylight, crept up to a car standing near one of the houses. Being in cover and risking being discovered at any moment, he waited until two officers left the house, and at the moment when they approached the car and, having opened the door, began to get in, he threw a grenade at the car, after which he managed to get to the corn .

At first, Fedor Voronkov also had to act alone. Landing and whistling a little, as agreed before jumping, Voronkov found a road going in the right direction with a linear communication line on poles. Voronkov began to cut the wires, twist them and throw them aside. Further ... as Voronkov said: "... I heard the rattling of wheels. Went off the road. Dismantled: they do not speak Russian. When the wagon drew level with me, I threw two grenades one after the other. After the explosion, I heard screams and gunfire. I ran across the corn field and went out to the plantation. Subsequently, Voronkov joined other paratroopers and went with them to his own.

Sailor Baklanov acted together with the foreman of the 1st article, Chumichev, according to his story, they "... went to the field road. We saw several wagons accompanied by two cavalrymen. Letting them get closer, Chumichev shouted: "Stop!"

The riders, soldiers and escorts were confused. And Chumichev shouts: "Platoon, grenades for battle!" I threw two grenades after Chumichev. The wagons were torn apart. The soldiers fell, and one cavalryman bent down to the horse's mane and galloped away.

We, leaving for the corn, gave in the direction of the road where the carts were, several bursts of machine guns and left. No one followed us..."

Sailors destroy the enemy with grenades.

The loss of the paratroopers amounted to 9 people killed, 11 people were able to go to the location of the 3rd Marine Regiment, although some of them were injured and two, who were seriously injured, were left until the main forces approached in

nearby villages.

The command considered the landing tasks completed, making the following conclusions based on the results of the operation:

"...1. The paratrooper group completed the task and justified its purpose.

2. We use a group of paratroopers of 13 people as the main backbone in the creation of paratrooper detachments.

3. For the near future, we set the task of creating a larger and better prepared group.

4. The most effective weapon was not a rifle, but a grenade and
autopistol.

5. The white dome of the parachute unmasks itself; it is necessary to paint the parachutes in a masking color.

6. Each fighter needs dressings for first aid.

7. It is extremely necessary for a skydiver to have wire cutters, a cat, a knife and other small tools ... "

It is difficult to judge the degree of effectiveness of the landing operations, but it can be said with certainty that communication with the key points of the Romanian defense - the Old and New Dofinovki was not broken during almost the entire 10-hour battle. The Romanians requested reinforcements, reported on the situation and were instructed not to leave both villages under any circumstances, defending them to the last possible.

However, it is difficult to expect an effective disruption of communications without having data on the organization of the Romanian communications system and the location of the main lines that

will need to be destroyed. No specific areas were allocated to the paratroopers for action, and they violated the lines that they stumbled upon. However, the efforts and sacrifices of the paratroopers were not in vain. The accumulated experience was studied and generalized, the mistakes made in the first operation of this kind in the Black Sea Fleet were taken into account. Three months later, during the Kerch-Feodosiya operation, the second similar landing force, thrown onto the Kerch Peninsula, acted much more efficiently, being able to carry out thorough reconnaissance of targets within 8 days in small groups, then effectively disrupt communications and create the enemy's appearance of landing large forces, and as a result, the main forces captured and held the Arbat arrow and Ak-monai until the landing of the amphibious assault ..

fire support

At dawn, the destroyers left for fire support of the landing, the gunboat "Red Georgia" and sea hunters fired at requests from the shore. Until one o'clock in the afternoon, the ships worked without interference according to reports from the correction posts. The destroyer "Merciless" acted in the interests of the 133rd regiment of the 421st SD, advancing in the direction of Vapnyarka. Reinforced corrective post from the destroyer consisting of 5 sailors under the command of Lieutenant Klimenko

advanced to a hill in front of a corn field, to the left of which there was a dam, along which Romanian equipment was transferred, which was the main target for the destroyer.

Not having time to turn around at a height, the corps came under mortar fire. After waiting for it, the sailors, temporarily sheltered from the enemy by the intensifying rain, dug a trench, installed a heavy machine gun in case the enemy tried to capture it, and masked the position with branches.

When the rain subsided a little, it became clear through the binoculars that in the cornfield the enemy was accumulating for an attack. The Romanians, who again noticed movement at a height after visibility improved, again opened fire on it, now from a machine gun. Klimenko used a Romanian machine gun as a sighting point and gave the first coordinates to it.

The sighting projectile exploded at the edge of the field, allowing you to immediately give the correct coordinates for salvo fire. After the first salvo, the enemy infantry began to leave the field.

Korpost transmitted to the destroyer the coordinates of the dam, along which enemy vehicles with infantry, wagons and artillery teams moved from the east to the west. It was more difficult to hit the dam, but after a series of adjustments, shells from the destroyer began to cover it too. Having taken aim, the destroyer increased the rate of fire and began to bombard the entire length of the dam with shells. A direct hit detonated an ammunition truck. In the end, traffic on the dam was completely

stopped.

Such Romanian pontoon bridges were fired upon by destroyer artillery in the landing area.

In the event of a sudden raid, the destroyers fired on the coast, continuously moving at full or medium speed. From the air, they were continuously covered by successive units of I-16 fighters allocated by the 69th Fighter Aviation Regiment (69th IAP).

At 13 o'clock, the "Flawless" maneuvering at high speeds was attacked by twelve dive bombers 1-87 of the 77th Luftwaffe squadron. They were met by nine fighters of the 69th regiment, loitering at that moment in the landing area, under the command of Captain Rykachev, but they did not manage to intercept before entering the combat course, although the Junkers went without cover.

The fighters, who did not have experience in interacting with ships that put up a barrage of barrage fire, were confused and could not effectively attack an enemy that was not protected by cover.

As Hero of the Soviet Union Cherevatenko, who later participated in this battle, later recalled:

"To attack the enemy turned out to be a difficult task. The fire of our batteries prevented us from approaching enemy aircraft at a distance of actual fire. Anyone who dared to take such a step was in danger of falling under the fragments of his own shells.

Unable to knock the enemy off the combat course, the fighters attacked the Germans at the exit from the dive. Two Junkers, having received damage, were forced to withdraw from the battle, but the rest continued to attack, essentially hiding from enemy fighters behind the fire of his own anti-aircraft artillery. After leaving

dives "Junkers" again sharply gained altitude near the very zone of action of anti-aircraft fire, knowing full well at what distance from it should be kept.

This went on for over 10 minutes. In the end, the fighters managed to break off another pair of Junkers from the main group, which, clinging to the very water and fighting off machine guns, also moved away from the battle. The remaining "Junkers" continued to hide not only behind anti-aircraft fire, but also behind the smoke of the ship that caught fire and stopped. The Junkers dropped the last bombs on a fixed target from level flight.

"Merciless" immediately stopped shelling the coast and hurried to the "Flawless", which was more seaward, at maximum speed. But dive bombers again

bombed as accurately as possible, and on the very first approach, despite the maximum speed, furious anti-aircraft fire, fighter attacks and desperate maneuvering of the commander of the "Flawless" Lieutenant Commander Buryak, the bombs fell near the sides of the "Flawless", damaging the pipes and both boiler rooms with fragments, began fire. The destroyer disappeared into the smoke. The approaching "Merciless" smoke prevented firing. Even the signalmen reported: "Nothing is visible - smoke and fire."

But the smoke did not interfere with the Junkers competently hiding behind it. Just as the nine I-16 destroyers covering the destroyers did not interfere with them ... Having entered from the leeward side, they bombed the stopped ship, dropping the remnants of bombs close by, of which, according to observers, 36 were dropped in total.

The "Flawless" signaled with a flag semaphore: "Please come and take it in tow. I don't have my own way."

"Merciless" approached the stern to the bow of the burning destroyer and quickly started the towing line. The surviving sailors of the "Flawless" put out the fire, put on plasters and continuously dragged objects from the interior to the port side, trying to reduce the roll.

On the dilapidated bridge, Lieutenant Commander Buryak was in charge.

In response to the proposal to send an emergency team, he reported into the mouthpiece: "It seems that they have already managed it themselves. Roll stopped. I ask you to tow at low speed to Odessa."

Coming up behind the "Merciless" "Courageous" received 26 wounded from the "Flawless".

"Merciless" at low speed led the damaged destroyer to Odessa, trying to be as careful as possible. An accidental tug was enough for the damaged ship to capsize. When cornering, the steering wheel shifted no more than five to seven degrees. In the event of a second raid, the "Flawless" would actually be doomed, since the "Merciless" would be forced to cut off the end and get away from it - the ships have the ability to cover each other only while they are on the move. Having lost speed, they turn into convenient targets. To accompany the towed destroyer, 2 "donkeys" from the 69th IAP flew in. Their effectiveness in repelling the Junkers raids on September 22 was low, but at least they made it difficult to aim bombing.

Having handed over the "Flawless" tugboat at the entrance to the port, the "Merciless" returned to the landing area and at about 17 o'clock was sent to fire at the pontoon crossing across the Dofinovsky estuary.

The terrain was level, the weather settled clear in the afternoon, and the well-visible crossing was a convenient target. The commander of the "Merciless" Negoda decided that it was possible to do without shooting, and indeed, the first salvo already fell near the narrow ribbon of the pontoon bridge in the very center of the estuary.

Pilots of the 69th IAP, who actively participated in the defense of Odessa.

Commissar of the ship Booth, anticipating easy prey; decided to arrange a small show out of the destruction of the crossing and ordered the radio broadcast of negotiations with an adjustment post on the shore to be turned on. At the Black Sea Fleet in 41, this was often practiced. With successful shelling of coastal targets, when there was no duel fight with enemy artillery, aviation did not interfere, and the target was easily accessible, they often included broadcast from combat posts to raise the morale of the crew. Corrections from the shore were the most suitable: "You are hitting the target. Turn on the light!" - "The shells lay down well. More than one, right two. Give me more fire!" - "Fine! - The bridge is broken. Fascists swim in the estuary! More fire!"

In the pauses between proofreadings, the commissioner began to explain to the sailors the meaning of what was happening:

"The crossing has been destroyed. This means that the Germans are cut off, they have no choice but to surrender. They wanted to visit Odessa. Well, their wish came true. They will pass through Odessa, they will march in formation, but only under the protection of our fighters. Gradually, Booth became more and more carried away, and after his comments, more and more often, more and more loud "cheers" began to be heard at combat posts. The battle gradually began to turn into a rally. And the commissar began to comment more and more colorfully: "Can you imagine what an uplift the inhabitants of Odessa will have when they see hundreds of captured Nazis! It would be necessary to lead these warriors around Odessa more. Let people look at them. And let the Germans themselves see into what abyss Hitler led Germany!"

Unexpectedly, the commissar's speech was very rudely interrupted by a deafening whistle.

The torpedo operator Sutyurin, sitting astride a torpedo tube, whistled.

Listening to the radio broadcast at the combat posts of the destroyer.

An experienced torpedo operator, not having work at torpedo tubes, included in the combat schedule only in an emergency party and not obliged to monitor the air, not paying attention to the broadcast from his not very convenient (even riding on a torpedo tube) position and not having binoculars, all the time watched the sky closely.

And now he, putting two fingers in his mouth, whistled to the spirit, pointing towards the horizon with his free hand. From there, one after another, increasing in size, dive bombers 1-87 approached.

And the observers of the air sectors and the signalmen duplicating them according to the combat schedule listened with enthusiasm to the commissar ...

A good whistle, as Eroshenko, the commander of the Tashkent leader, recalled, is able to block even the roar of heavy machine guns. Sutyurin was heard on the bridge and finally an air raid alert was issued.

As counted at the fire control posts, 26

dive-bombers, while nine are enough to sink a destroyer. The coast continued to demand fire, but the destroyer was no longer up to the crossing. Having stopped firing, "Merciless" with all possible agility, with the maximum speed, headed for "Boyky" in order to disperse the bombers and condense anti-aircraft fire.

This succeeded to some extent, but 5 "Junkers" went to the "Boykom" in order to prevent the concentration of fire. "Merciless", having managed to gain the necessary speed, opened fire on the aircraft and began an evasive maneuver. Burying its nose into its own surf, the destroyer described the most steep arc.

The Junkers made their first approach one at a time, approaching from behind along the course of the ship. Not relying on speed in such a situation, Negoda, on the contrary, slowed down and applied the classic evasion maneuver for transport ships: moving away from the drop point.

Observing the first Junkers, Negoda waited until the bombs fell from him, falling directly along the course, and sharply shifted the handles of the machine telegraphs to reverse.

The Junkers, bombing from a height of 700 meters, dropped three bombs at once, one of which exploded on the course, and the other two were close to it on the sides, but all three were ahead of the ship.

The second and third Junkers did the same, the rest became more economical and saved their ammunition, throwing bombs one or two at a time.

While the destroyer was dodging 20 aircraft that came in one by two and two from behind, Captain Elokhin's group of fighters, covering the ships, arrived in time to help him. Rushing towards the formation of dive-bombers, they attacked its middle. The Junkers shied away from them in different directions, straying from their combat course. After the appearance of fighters, dive bombers changed tactics. Involuntarily, they had to break up into groups, and now they attacked in groups from two or three directions at the same time, dropping bombs only from a height of no more than 300 meters and, if the opportunity arose, firing at superstructures with cannons and machine guns.

During one of these visits, when the Junkers managed to fire a burst on the bridge, the commander of the ship almost died. 1st Assistant Lieutenant Commander

Kabistov managed to tear it away from the handles of the machine telegraph and push it under the ledge of the command and rangefinder post, after which the machine telegraph was smashed by bullets.

The reports of the watchmen became more and more alarming:

"Flew! Falling right! Left! Two planes are diving on the right! Left! Bombs are falling behind...

With simultaneous attacks, only maneuvering and speed could save the ship, especially since the "Courageous" could not help the "Merciless" in any way, also fighting off the enemy.

"Merciless" continuously wrote out eights. He went into zigzags and again wrote out eights. From close gaps, columns of water continuously fell on the deck, but they could not put out fires from explosions of small bombs. Shrapnel constantly drummed on the superstructures, punching through chimneys and ripping off canvas awnings where they still survived.

The Junkers failed to get into the stern, but from close explosions of bombs falling next to it, the hull was damaged in the region of the 173rd frame, a corrugation formed on the deck and along the sides. The stern torpedo tube was triggered by the shock: the torpedoes, with the engines turned on, hit the bulkhead of the diesel generator compartment, but, fortunately, did not explode. Through cracks, water began to flow into the stern quarters; the destroyer's speed, initially brought to 24 knots, began to fall. The maneuvers performed have become less effective.

In the end, breaking through the barrage, one of the Junkers accurately dropped two bombs, flying at the level of the masts. Dodge them already impossible.

One of the bombs, breaking through the forecastle deck near the starboard hawse, went over the side and exploded in the water. Another exploded in the depths of the hull, in the area of the nose capstan motor.

As a result, the entire bow of the hull up to the 35th frame turned out to be actually torn off and kept only on twisted skin sheets.

There were severe damage to the hull up to the level of the 44th frame.

The blast wave of a bomb that exploded on the forecastle threw the signalman Sergeyev from the signal bridge directly onto the commander of the ship, Captain 3rd Rank Negoda, who briefly lost consciousness.

The captain-lieutenant Kabistov reversed the ship and rushed forward to deal with the amount of damage, leaving the commander of the ship's commissar Bout with the unconscious commander and calling a pomlek to the bridge (healer's assistant - paramedic).

At that moment, Negoda came to his senses and, seeing that the destroyer was reversing, turned the telegraph knobs to "full speed ahead". Both cars gave 180 rpm. Before the bewildered Booth could do anything, the destroyer took so much water into the bow that the trim on the bow was 1.5 meters. However, the dive bombers were also not entirely lucky. There were not enough bombs to finish off the ship, as in the case of the Frunze, and the Junkers stopped the raid. In total, according to the estimates of destroyer observers, 84 bombs were dropped on the Merciless.

Elokhin's fighters, like the previous cover group, again failed to prevent the enemy from completing their combat mission, or to shoot down at least one car.

After the fires were extinguished, an inspection showed that almost all the premises located in the bow were damaged. The commander of the "Boykoy" Godlevsky asked with a semaphore if help was needed.

To which the "Merciless" replied: "Thank you for the service. I will reach Odessa on my own."

Having reinforced the bulkheads and carried out urgent emergency work, the "Merciless" in reverse really managed to slowly get to Odessa, although most of the devices and mechanisms were disabled. The explosions damaged the gyrocompass, and the magnetic compass was thrown from the binnacle, but it survived. The helmsman Rykov led the ship along it, holding the compass bowl in his hands. Left alone, "Boikiy" switched the spotters of "Merciless" to himself and fired at several targets at once: bow guns at his own, stern - at the targets of "Merciless".

The gunboat and sea hunters, so needed at the time of the landing, did not play a significant role during the fire support of his actions. Germans,

occupied by destroyers, did not pay any attention to them.

Over the entire period of fire support, the ships fired more than 3 thousand shells at the enemy. In the afternoon, enemy air raids were able to largely neutralize the fire support of the ships, but this could no longer have an impact on the overall development of the landing operation.

True, when only Boiky remained in service out of all the destroyers, the two 100-mm gunboat guns also acquired a certain significance. But of the shells fired by her during the support of the landing, most of the shells were still of small caliber.

It is difficult to say how events would have developed if a brigade of cruisers had remained in the landing area. The experience of the battles showed that the cruisers, marching in an order accompanied by destroyers without any losses, could easily repel a raid by nine Junkers, and they would also have coped with 26 dive bombers, but perhaps the enemy could pull to destroy such a tempting target and more aviation.

The fighters of the 69th Air Regiment could not provide effective assistance to the ships, since the entire composition of the regiment was constantly engaged in attacking the bridgehead, and only 2 vehicles were constantly on duty over the landing area. True, the nines of the cover could not fulfill their task, even when they counteracted 12 enemy dive bombers - the fighters were completely unprepared to interact with their ships, defending themselves from the enemy with anti-aircraft guns.
fire.

Operation development

(7 a.m. - 5 p.m. September 22)

On September 22, the sun in the Crimea rises at 6:44 am, with its first rays, hostilities intensified.

Fighter and attack aircraft of the OOR and the Black Sea Fleet stormed the Chaplinka airfield at dawn. Of the 30 fighters that were there, not one could rise into the air. Up to 10 attacks were made on the airfield. The blows were delivered by 3 Il-2, 2 I-153 and

5 I-16. 7 Me-109 and 3 Yu-88, 7 flight crew tents, fuel tanks were destroyed in the parking lots. The cover planes fought an air battle with 10 Me 109s, during which two of them were shot down.

According to official data, only one fighter was lost during the attack - Lieutenant Shkutsky.

Airfields were also attacked in the area of the settlements of Badey and Zeltsy. These two airstrikes are rather obscure and are not often described in the literature on the operation.

Data on the location of these airfields were obtained already before the operation itself from a captured Romanian pilot who had parachuted from a downed Hurricane. Already at dusk on September 21, 4 I-16s urgently carried out additional reconnaissance and spotted both airfields. About three dozen Messerschmitts were based at Badei, and about a dozen Junkers were based at Zeltsov.

The planes had just been transferred to both airfields and had not yet been

dispersed due to unprepared parking. The enemy was going to strike from these jump airfields in the morning and had not yet equipped any shelters.

But it was too late to add new targets to those that were included on September 22 in the combat missions of naval bomber aviation. Six I-16 units of the 69th Regiment and a pair of Il-2 attack aircraft were used to strike at airfields.

The main blow was delivered on the field airfield near Badey by a group of three units, led by the regiment commander, Major Shestakov, a pair of Lieutenant Kuteinikov's attack aircraft suppressed anti-aircraft artillery.

Shestakov's group approached the target with a decrease, turning off the engines. "The Messerschmitts stood at the edge of the forest in two rows" under the ruler "- at the same distance from each other and without any disguise. Near all the machines were mechanics and minders, there was a pre-flight preparation. I-16s did not have bombs, the limited stocks of which were left to support the landing, and fired only from airborne weapons.

The first blow was delivered to the tents of the personnel, also located without any shelter. In the second and third visits, the fighters stormed the planes in the parking lot, the last - barrels of gasoline and stacks of ammunition. At the same time, a group of the deputy commander of the regiment, Captain Rykachev, attacked the airfield near Zeltsy, but there were no planes on it, and the fighters attacked only the ground personnel who were at the airfield. And after he hid in the forest - on the Romanian infantry battalion, which was concentrating in the open.

Naval bomber aviation dealt a second blow - the first was at four in the morning - against enemy reserves in the areas of Sverdlovo, Kubanka, Gildendorf, and the Ilyichevka state farm.

After the air raids, Rear Admiral Zhukov tried to organize air cover for the landing. It turned out that the pilots did not have a clear idea of where the airborne regiment and the advancing divisions were now located. However, as it turned out, the headquarters of the OOR had neither information about the location of the advancing units, nor any connection with them.

Position calculation.

||
yavod

names

Tanks NI (To Fright) were often equipped with sailor crews.

Zhukov tried to find out from his deputy Major General Shishenin. - Where is the landing now? - he asked.

- We have information about the completion of the landing, that the resistance of the enemy was weak. We know that the destroyers support the landing at the request of the correction posts landed with the third naval regiment. Therefore, they have a connection with the regiment. Through them we can find out where

there is a landing, but this will take time. With the commander of the regiment headquarters has no connection.

- Do the divisions have a connection with the airborne regiment?

- About ten or fifteen minutes ago it was not yet installed.

"How could you let this happen?! Zhukov flared up. "Immediately establish direct communication with the regiment commander and at any moment know where the landing force is and what it is doing!"

"We know, but only indirectly," said Shishenin.

- No "indirectly"! Do it.

General Shishenin summoned the chief of communications, Colonel Bogomolov, and gave him a hard time. He asked for a small hunter to be placed at his disposal. Signalman lieutenant Flokey and senior radio operator Red Army soldier Netes with a 5-AK radio set departed for the landing site and contacted the command of the naval regiment. Communication with the landing force was established and operated uninterruptedly until the connection of the 3rd regiment with units of the 421st division.

The same situation was in the divisions.

Early in the morning, PMC Azarov left for Kryzhanovka to the command post of the 421st division. Batteries of the artillery regiments of the Primorsky Army attached to it and two batteries of the Odessa Naval Base were already carrying fire into the depths.

"We are suffering heavy losses from mortar fire," the division commander, Colonel Kochenov, complained. - How many times the battalions went on the attack! But are you still moving?

- Slowly. Here we will knock down their firing points from the crest - and it will go.

- And the connection with the landing regiment? Azarov asked.

- Something is not right.

Could not contact the airborne regiment and signalmen communications of the fleet.

As the deputy head of communications of the fleet, captain of the 3rd rank Gusev, said: "Both the call signs and the wave are known, but we cannot communicate."

Uninterrupted communication with the landing force was established only in the afternoon. At 7.30, according to the plan, artillery preparation was to begin in the interests of both divisions going on the offensive at 8.00. Thus, the enemy, who had already fought off the landing force near Grigorievka for 5 hours, received 45 minutes of daylight hours to deliver a preemptive strike against troops preparing to go on the offensive.

It is not surprising that half an hour before the appointed time, the Romanians unexpectedly began artillery preparation.

Sailors at the forefront.

At 0700, heavy artillery and mortar shelling began on the positions of the troops of the eastern sector of defense.

As the commander of the 421st division, Colonel Kochenev, later recalled: "The fire is strong, and then there is fog. It mixed with smoke, and the result was such a veil that it was hard to breathe. Shells are bursting ahead and in depth, behind the second

trench... Nachart Bolotov and I look at each other and think - what does this mean? Has the enemy guessed our plan, decided to forestall it? Or just coincidence?

The enemy in the sector of the eastern sector was on the defensive, fenced off with rows of barbed wire, and periodically arranged reconnaissance in force and attempts to break through the front in a narrow sector.

After weighing all the pros and cons, the command of the coastal army decided, despite the losses suffered by the units during the artillery attack, not to cancel the artillery preparation and not to postpone the start of the offensive - the landing force had already captured Grigorievka and was developing the offensive in the direction of the eastern sector.

The artillery preparation began on time, however, due to a preemptive raid by the Romanian artillery, its strength turned out to be weakened - part of the firepower of the artillery regiment, naval and coastal artillery was diverted to suppress enemy firepower.

The start of the offensive, however, was delayed a little until the enemy artillery fire was completely suppressed, and the units went over to the offensive at the beginning of the ninth. The main blow was dealt by two regiments of the fresh 157th division, supported by a tank battalion. The 421st division attacked without any tanks at all, they were not even allocated Odessa research institutes.

This distribution of forces immediately affected the course of the battle that had begun.

On the left flank, the offensive immediately went faster than in other sectors. The 157th division dealt the main blow with the 716th Rifle Regiment of Sotskov, reinforced by a company of tanks. He advanced between the Kuyalnitsky estuary and the railway almost directly to the north - to Gildendorf (Novoselovka). Another regiment of Tomilov's division - the 633rd - with a tank platoon attached to it, advanced to the right of the railway to the Ilyichevka state farm. None of the offensive sectors of the 157th

division, the enemy could not resist.

In the offensive zone of the 421st division, a completely opposite picture developed. By 11 o'clock the advancing units approached the Fontanka. In all the stone buildings of the Fontanka, the enemy set up firing points. At the dominant height were located bunkers and trenches, more than 20 heavy machine guns, solid barbed wire. The Romanians resisted stubbornly, repelling

multiple attacks.

After the concentration of artillery fire at the height did not bring results, home-made NI tanks were nevertheless transferred here - this was one of the last cases of their use. But by the time they arrived, the units were already heavily drained of blood and could no longer occupy the height on their own. The regimental reserve was brought into battle.

With the introduction of the second echelon of the 54th Infantry Regiment into battle, by 4 p.m., after a 5-hour battle, they captured the height. The enemy could not withstand the blow and, throwing his weapons, leaving the wounded on the battlefield, began to flee in a northwestern direction.

Near the highway Odessa - Nikolaev, between the road and the coast, battalion of the 1330th

infantry regiment was forced to lie down in front of a wire fence of five stakes, covered by strong machine-gun fire.

The regiment consisted of marines of the 1st and 2nd Black Sea regiments of marines, merged due to losses incurred into one unit, transferred to the 421st division as the 1330th rifle regiment.

The battalion also suffered heavy losses. What even one tank could easily do cost a rifle battalion dearly. The sailors chopped the wire with shovels, threw pea jackets thrown off their shoulders over it. Those who were ahead tried to throw grenades at the Romanian machine guns. The numerical superiority allowed the sailors to push back the Romanians with heavy losses, and they began to slowly move on.

The right flank of the advancing divisions lagged more and more behind each hour.
left.

The 716th regiment of Tomilov's 157th division pulled ahead the furthest and occupied Gildendorf shortly after noon. The 633rd regiment occupied the Ilyichevka state farm.

By this time, the 1330th regiment, which had previously moved in leaps and bounds, was firmly stuck in front of a height fortified by the enemy at a mark of 58.0 and an agricultural complex located nearby.

At 13.30, the commander of the Primorsky Army, Lieutenant General Sofronov, recognized the need to temporarily suspend the offensive. Due to the uneven advance of troops in neighboring sectors, large gaps formed between the units. Some commanders, carried away by the pursuit of the enemy, completely lost contact with their neighbors, did not have time to move regimental artillery to new firing positions, transfer command posts, and communications.

It became obvious that the further advance of the 157th division in the situation that had arisen was meaningless and that it was necessary to strengthen at least the central sector due to the advanced left flank.

Romanian guns captured near Odessa were publicly paraded through the streets of the city.

More successful were the actions of the 3rd Naval Regiment. His 3rd battalion launched an offensive against Staraya Dofinovka. By this time, the Romanians had managed to receive an order to defend both Dofinovka to the last opportunity. The 1st battalion advanced from Grigoryevka to Chebanka and Novaya Dofinovka to link up with units of the 421st division.

In one of the hollows not far from Grigorievka, the reconnaissance regiment of the landing regiment discovered the firing position of a heavy artillery battery - as it turned out later, the one that had recently complicated the work of the Odessa port the most. The scouts themselves captured the battery, having managed to creep up to it imperceptibly, after which the outcome of the battle was decided by grenades and bayonets. They killed part of the gun servants, part fled. Four 150 mm guns were captured in good condition, with a large number of shells.

Then these cannons were driven through the streets of Odessa, and on the long barrel of one of them, Odessans read the inscription drawn in chalk, which got into the photographs of photojournalists, and through them into the history of the war: "She fired at Odessa. No more shooting!" In the political report of the military commissar of the regiment, battalion commissar Slesarev, it was specifically noted that the inscription was proposed to be made

participant in the capture of the battery, Red Navy sailor Petrenko.

Paratroopers of the 3rd Naval Regiment near Grigorievka.

The enemy did not run everywhere. In Chebanka, where some enemy headquarters was located, and in the area of the Kotovsky collective farm, the sailors met strong resistance. They were greatly assisted by the mortars of the battery of junior lieutenant Zaits and the gunners of Boikoy, Impeccable and Merciless, who fired according to the corrective posts.

As the assault advanced, the enemy's resistance increased, especially in the direction of Chebanka, where the battalion of Senior Lieutenant Mikhailov was advancing. The enemy deployed up to two regiments of infantry against the marines, pulled up artillery, mortars, but could not detain the paratroopers. They were effectively supported by destroyers with fire, spotters were in the battle formations of the regiment. Air support was provided by the Odessa "donkeys" of the 61st IAP, which acted as attack aircraft.

At the end of the day, the landing took possession of the Chebanka area, Staraya and Novaya Dofinovka, thereby completing their task. The regiment that landed at Grigorievka had to connect with units of the OOR, which happened in a few hours
Later.

At 15:00, having completed the regrouping and brought up firepower, the 157th division resumed the offensive. The 716th regiment, which had tanks, again began to advance faster than anyone else, but now, after a successful movement along the coast of the Kuyalnitsky estuary, it began to turn towards the central sector of the offensive. Under the threat of encirclement, the Romanians were forced to begin to leave their positions, first in the center, and then on the right flank.

The 421st division was finally able to occupy Hill 58.0 and the agricultural complex. Further, the enemy was already rolling back, without offering significant resistance. True, it was not possible to encircle the Romanians, but on the day of the fighting, the Primorsky Army reached the borders between the Bolshoi Adzhalytsky and Kuyalnitsky estuaries, that is, restored everything given in the eastern sector during the month of fighting.

The left wing of the Romanian troops besieging Odessa, which was based on the 13th and 15th infantry divisions, began to withdraw.

By 5 p.m., the 157th division reached the line of the Shevchenko farm and the heights located to the east of it. The 421st division captured the areas of the state farm named after Voroshilov, Vapnyarka and Aleksandrovka.

By the end of the day, the 421st division reached the Bolshoi Adzhalyk Estuary. The 157th division, which captured the village of Shevchenko, also successfully carried out its task. At the road to Sverdlovo, the flanks of both divisions joined.

As long as the enemy did not transfer fresh units to this direction, there was a possibility of further advancement. But this meant further expanding the front of the Eastern Sector, which only one weakened 421st division had to hold in the future, since the 157th division was planned to be urgently transferred to plug holes in other sectors.

Completion of the operation

(17:00 September 22 - 00:00 September 23)

With the onset of darkness, the 157th division was ordered to stop pursuing enemy units. By this time, a large gap had again formed between the 633rd regiment and its neighbor on the right, which should be liquidated as quickly as possible.

At 11 p.m., the troops were given a combat order, which indicated a new line of defense. It began on the other side of the Bolshoi Adzhalyk estuary beyond Novaya Dofinovka (there was no task to hold Staraya Dofinovka and Chebanka, which the troops captured with such difficulty) and then ran north of the liberated Aleksandrovka and Gildendorf, maintaining the arched shape of the former front edge between the estuaries. The territory of the Odessa bridgehead increased by about 120 square kilometers.

At night, the sailors of the 1330th joint venture met with their comrades from the 3rd marine shelf.

The 3rd Marine Regiment was included in the 421st Division. However, this did not strengthen it at all, since the 54th Razinsky Rifle Regiment was immediately transferred to the 25th Chapaev Rifle Division, from which it was taken at one time.

On the same night, the replacement of the regiments of the 157th division began at the lines reached during the counterattack. For the time being, they were diverted to Nerubaiskoe and Usatovo, in order to then occupy areas in the Western and Southern sectors.

During the day of September 22, quite significant reinforcements arrived in Odessa.

Early in the morning, the Chapaev transport delivered the 48th separate mortar division, which consisted of 8 multiple launch rocket launchers - Katyushas. However, due to the limited number of shells, it was decided not to bring him into battle, and he did not take part in the operation.

For the first time the division entered the battle on October 2 and, due to the lack of rockets, was used mainly only for morale.

Romanian prisoners captured by paratroopers.

On the day he fired no more than 5 volleys, after which he was transferred to the next threatened area, where the next day he again fired no more than five volleys. But such a limited use of "Katyushas" did not last long.

The division was used in this way only three times: when the Romanians struck near Dalnik and attempts to break through the front in the areas of the Sukhoi Estuary and near the village

Tatar. After that, the use of "Katyushas" became completely conditional, since, having got into position, they fired only one or two volleys.

The transport "Kursk" also arrived, delivering two thousand fighters and commanders, weapons and ammunition.

All the units participating in the operation retained their combat effectiveness, and the insignificant losses suffered by the fresh 157th division made it possible to immediately use it in the most threatened areas of defense.

The Romanian troops lost not only the controlled territory, but also

a significant part of the personnel.

The 13th Infantry Division suffered the greatest losses from an unexpected counterattack.

Romanian.

During the operation, significant trophies were captured.

She practically did not participate in further hostilities near Odessa. The 15th Infantry Division was also hard hit, although it probably suffered less losses.

It was, of course, impossible to accurately determine the damage inflicted on the enemy during the day of the counterattack. According to reports, funeral teams had to bury about two thousand Romanian soldiers and officers.

The number of captured prisoners is not exactly known, but is rather small: nowhere are numbers higher than 200-500 people indicated. This is explained by the fact that the enemy was basically squeezed out of his positions, since the available forces were not enough to carry out maneuvers to encircle even relatively small strongholds.

Reports from the Soviet Information Bureau reported the success of the operation rather cautiously. The first message was made on September 24 and did not report on the nature of the operation, only on the losses inflicted on the enemy.

From the morning message of September 24, 1941:

“On the outskirts of Odessa, our troops defeated units of the recently re-equipped 13th and 15th Romanian infantry divisions. Our fighters captured 2 batteries of heavy guns, 100 machine guns, many mortars and ammunition. The collection of trophies and their counting continues.”

In the evening message of September 26, more detailed information was already given:

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ROMANIAN DIVISIONS NEAR ODESSA

The morning report of the Soviet Information Bureau of September 24 spoke of a new defeat on the outskirts of Odessa of the 13th and 15th replenished Romanian divisions. The additional information received gives a more detailed picture of the defeat of the Romanian divisions.

On September 22, our troops, with a combined attack of infantry units and a landing of sailors, abandoned by our ships behind enemy lines, delivered a strong surprise blow to the Romanian troops on the outskirts of Odessa. The actions of the ground troops were supported by the fire of several ships of the Black Sea Fleet and aviation.

As a result of the successful operation of our troops, the Romanians suffered serious losses in people and weapons. The total losses of the Romanians killed, wounded and captured are at least 5000-6000 soldiers; 2,000 of them were killed. According to incomplete data, our units captured 33 guns of various calibers, including several heavy long-range ones, 6 tanks, 2,000 rifles, 110 machine guns, 30 mortars, 130 machine guns, 4,000 shells, 15,000 mines, a large number of boxes with rifle cartridges and grenades.

Pushing the enemy back 5-10 kilometers, knocking him out of the positions from where he fired at the city and port, the Soviet troops completed their task.

The shelling of the city, the port and approaches to it from the northeast stopped completely. This was the main result of the September counterattack. The ousting of the enemy from the coast of the Gulf of Odessa meant the end of such a situation, when every ship on its way to Odessa found itself under artillery fire.

The enemy, however, retained the opportunity to shell Odessa from the south - from behind the Dry Estuary, and also from the west - from Dalnik. But from there he fired at the squares, not seeing the targets. It seemed not so terrible after the city got rid of the destructive fire, corrected from the coast and from the heights between the northern estuaries. And now the shells did not reach the port at all, as well as the Peresyp area.

For almost two days there was no shelling from the south either. Scouts and division headquarters reported on the regrouping of units of the 4th Romanian army. As early as September 22, the Romanians began a hasty transfer of reserves to the eastern direction, clearly fearing that the offensive there would continue. Enemy attacks in other sectors did not stop, but became somehow more uncertain. For the first time in a long time, it was said about individual sectors of the front in divisional operational reports: "The day passed calmly."

Operation lessons

After the operation, it became possible to regroup the troops, now concentrating the main forces on the defense of the Western and Southern sectors. In general, the landing operation made it possible to stabilize the situation near Odessa at least until the end of September and made it quite possible to continue the defense of the city, which was terminated in early October mainly due to the worsening situation in the Crimea.

A landing operation of this magnitude was carried out by the Black Sea Fleet for the first time.

And during its implementation, of course, many mistakes were made, the main of which was the decision to land troops before the landing craft and fire support units arrived.

The landing time to the shore on longboats was about 30 minutes. All this time, the paratroopers suffered losses from enemy fire. Even greater problems were created by the absence of a gunboat, a patrol ship and sea hunters capable of supporting the landing force with fire, being in close proximity to the coast, and destroying firing points in the landing area.

The poorly chosen landing site also increased the number of casualties suffered. The paratroopers were forced to move to the shore under fire knee-deep in water. The landing site, limited by rocks from the flanks, allowed the Romanians to easily shoot through the entire beach.

The second major mistake was the adoption of an unjustified decision to withdraw the cruiser brigade. Enemy aviation in cash was unable to

cause her significant damage, as shown by an attempt to raid her during the transition from Sevastopol. However, being under the impression of the sinking of the Frunze, the command of the fleet was clearly in a hurry to withdraw the cruiser, depriving the landing

powerful fire support of their artillery.

Kualnik \ } HER Scheme of the combined offensive | operation carried out in the Eastern Sector of the OOR on September 22, 1941

However, in general, the decision to use cruisers and destroyers for landings, which was first addressed before the war, was progressive at that time and stood the test of time. Having a large number

large-caliber and anti-aircraft artillery, fast cruisers and destroyers were able to quickly deliver a fairly significant number of paratroopers to the landing site and at the same time provide them with protection at the transition and support with fire within the range of their guns.

Therefore, the cruisers continued to be used for the transport of troops, and sometimes as landing craft, as was the case during the Kerch-Feodosiya operation.

The decision not to issue dry rations to the landing fighters was also controversial, replacing it with an additional set of ammunition.

The decision to use airborne landings during landings from the sea turned out to be tactically correct and, on the whole, very promising. But, having no experience in conducting such operations, the command of the Black Sea Fleet made a number of mistakes in preparing and conducting the landing.

In the training of paratroopers, the experience of the existing airborne units of the Red Army and their existing developments were not used. In essence, the fleet created its own airborne unit from scratch. As a result, some paratroopers, as the case with Korolyov showed, did not even know how to correctly attach their weapons when disembarking.

The weapons issued to the paratroopers did not meet the tasks assigned to them. With a small number of paratroopers, which allowed them to fight only at short and medium distances, self-loading rifles, in essence, were not needed.

It turned out to be optimal to arm the paratroopers with machine guns in combination with knives and a large number of grenades. Damage to communication lines turned out to be ineffective without their preliminary reconnaissance. The total number of troops thrown out was also insufficient, although the tactics of action in small groups justified themselves in the future.

It turned out that medical and sanitary training, which in the conditions of action in small groups without the use of medical instructors, should have been more in-depth, was not well thought out, and there were not enough dressings in sufficient quantities.

The accumulated experience was used in the preparation of the Kerch-Feodosiya operation, during which the second similar landing force, thrown onto the Kerch Peninsula, acted much more efficiently, having carried out a thorough preliminary reconnaissance of targets, and as a result effectively disrupted communications and created the enemy's appearance of landing large forces, which allowed the main landing forces not to limit themselves to sabotage operations, but also to capture and hold the Arbat Spit and Ak-

Monai.

The actions of fighter aviation in covering ships, providing fire support to the landing force, also turned out to be unsatisfactory. During two air battles, nine I-16s were unable to effectively counter dive bomber raids on destroyers. The unpreparedness of fighter aircraft to interact with their ships, leading anti-aircraft fire, played a role.

The Germans, on the contrary, turned out to be perfectly adapted to such a situation. The dive pilots of the 77th squadron, who had experience in performing similar tasks in the Mediterranean theater of operations, easily adapted to any fighter tactics and, acting without the cover of their own fighters, confidently attacked ships both in formation and in small groups.

Much more successful were the actions of aviation in the fire support of the landing. The meager air forces of the OOR and the Black Sea Fleet, allocated for assault strikes in the interests of the landing force, were used competently and effectively. Air supremacy was ensured by strikes against enemy airfields before the start of the operation. All day on September 22, enemy aircraft, with the exception of the 77th squadron, could not have a noticeable impact on the course of events.

Artillery preparation at the offensive site in the Eastern Sector was scheduled 45 minutes after sunrise, which made it possible for the Romanians, who had already fought off the landing force for 5 hours, to launch a preemptive fire strike on the troops preparing to go on the offensive.

A stable connection with the airborne regiment was not established in a timely manner, to which communications delegates had to be sent almost all day, which made it difficult to provide effective fire support.

When organizing a strike by forces of two divisions towards the landing, there was a clear distortion with the allocation of forces and means of the 157th Infantry Division. As a result, the 421st division suffered significant losses, and the pace of its offensive constantly lagged behind the planned ones. In the absence of a sufficient number of anti-tank weapons among the Romanians, the presence in the 1330th SP of at least a few tanks supporting it, even NI, would significantly reduce its losses.

The loss of the pace of the offensive allowed the remnants of the defeated 13th Infantry Division of the Romanians to withdraw, avoiding encirclement and complete destruction. The Romanian command quickly reacted to the situation that had changed with the start of the landing and launched a preemptive artillery strike, weakening the strength of the artillery preparation that followed, as a significant part of the firepower of the army and navy switched to suppressing the Romanian artillery.

In general, the Romanian troops once again demonstrated the high combat capability of their personnel units, which had a large number of professional military personnel of junior command and extra-long-term staff - siegemen. In the areas of height 58.0 and the agricultural complex, the Romanians put up stubborn resistance, and in Chebanke and both Dofinovka, which they used as strongholds, defended themselves until dark.

A trophy Romanian map captured in the landing area.

The orders of the Romanian command, prescribing not to take a single step back, in

as a whole were carried out, and the Romanian side retained control of the battle until its very end.

However, all attempts by the Romanian troops to turn the tide were thwarted, and primarily due to the fire support provided to the landing force by aviation and navy. The Romanian troops, exhausted by previous battles, were generally not ready for a counterattack of such force, and they simply could not transfer a significant number of troops to a threatening area. The possibility of developing an offensive in the Eastern Sector remained on September 23, but the Soviet command did not have the strength to defend a wider area than that captured during the day of fighting on September 22.

But even on this day, the Soviet troops managed to return everything captured by the Romanians in this sector for a whole month of fighting.

In general, despite the mistakes made due to lack of experience in planning and implementing such operations, the operation ended in complete success. Many of the operational developments, "brought to mind", were successfully used throughout the subsequent long years of the war.

The use of cruisers and destroyers, this "Soviet way" of landing operations, outlined even before the war and dictated by the lack of specialized landing craft, was repeatedly used and subsequently with increasing efficiency.

Such a "classic" technique as landing an airborne assault in the rear of an enemy attacked from the sea also turned out to be effective.

Yes, the mistakes made during the preparation and landing of the troops were worth the sacrifice. But it cannot be said that these sacrifices were in vain. And not only because the landing

landing was completed successfully. The mistakes made were not gross, most likely, they were inevitable - as they were the result of rapid changes in the operational stop, to which it was not always enough to respond correctly
experience.

In the future, during all subsequent long and bloody years of the war, the command of the Black Sea Fleet had to carry out increasingly complex and large-scale landing operations. And with each subsequent operation, invaluable combat experience grew and accumulated, and in this experience the contribution of the first and therefore such a difficult and important landing was constantly and clearly visible.

Part Three Landing in the north Red Navy against the rangers

"Beastly" plans

(January 27, 1941 - June 20, 1941)

The plan for the offensive of the German-Finnish troops on the 120-kilometer Murmansk sector of the Northern Front was codenamed "ZPegasN \$" - Silver Fox.

The command of the Wehrmacht, realizing the importance and strategic importance of the northern sea communications of the USSR and the Kirov railway, paid serious attention to the capture of the Soviet Arctic and Karelia.

Even before the Wehrmacht invaded the USSR, Keitel, Chief of Staff of the German Armed Forces, emphasized: "Murmansk, as the main stronghold of the Russians in the summer, is given, especially in connection with the likely Anglo-Russian cooperation, much more importance than in the last Finnish-Russian war. Therefore, it is important not only to disrupt its land communications, but also to seize this stronghold, because its connection by sea through Arkhangelsk with the country cannot be interrupted in any other way.

By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the German High Command concentrated in the northern regions of Finland in the strip from Ukhta to the Arctic Ocean a 150,000-strong group of ground forces united in the army "Norway" under the command of Colonel General Filkenhorst. It consisted of nine infantry, two mountain divisions and the SS Sever brigade. Of these, 7 infantry divisions defended the sea coast and carried out occupational service in Norway, and the 163rd infantry division (without one regiment) was transferred to the operational subordination of the Finnish command for combat operations as part of the Karelian army. The rest of the formations (the mining corps "Norway" and the 36th army corps) were intended for operations in the northern regions of the USSR. In addition, the 3rd Finnish Army Corps was included in the army "Norway".

The mountain corps "Norway" included the 2nd and 3rd mountain divisions, each of which consisted of two mountain and one artillery regiments with a total strength of 12,200 people. The armament of each mountain division consisted of 450 machine guns, 700 machine guns, 102 guns of caliber from 37 to 150 mm and 112 mortars of caliber from 50 to 81 mm.

The 36th Army Corps consisted of the 169th Infantry Division, the SS Sever Brigade, the 324th Infantry Regiment, the 163rd Infantry Division and the 6th Finnish Division, the 40th Separate Tank Battalion and the 112th Separate Tank Battalion. The German infantry division included three infantry and one artillery regiment, numbered 16.8 thousand people. and had 600 machine guns, 760 machine guns, 74 guns, 75 anti-tank guns, 138 mortars, 12 anti-aircraft guns and 96 anti-tank guns. The corps included about 100 tanks, incl.

flamethrower.

The first phase of Operation Silver Fox was code-named "Vepneg" (Reindeer) and involved the capture of the nickel mining area in Petsamo by the Norway Mountain Corps.

The second stage of the operation - "PJayp@aise" (Platinum Fox) included the offensive of German troops through Titovka, Ura-Guba to Polyarny and Murmansk. The goals of this stage were to capture the bases of the Northern Fleet and the blockade of Murmansk, followed by access to the coast of the White Sea and the capture of Arkhangelsk. The third stage of the operation - "Rołagas|z" (Fox) was to be carried out simultaneously with the second and included the offensive of the 2nd mountain rifle division on Polyarny, as well as the offensive of German and Finnish units east of Kemijärvi.

The development of plans for the operation was completed by the German command on January 27, 1941.

During the operation, it was envisaged by the forces of the German army "Norway" together with the Finnish 3rd Army Corps to seize the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas, the main naval base of the Northern Fleet Polyarny, Murmansk, Kandalaksha and cut the Kirov railway (Leningrad - Murmansk), and subsequently take Arkhangelsk.

The offensive of the army "Norway" was to be supported by 400 German aircraft of the 5th Air Fleet, concentrated on airfields in Northern Finland and Norway, and 500 combat aircraft of the Finnish Air Force.

The dates for the start of the offensive were determined by the Nazi High Command: for the mountain corps "Norway" - June 28 or 29, for the 36th Army Corps - July 1, for the 3rd Finnish Army Corps - 30 June.

The ground grouping of the enemy in the Arctic was opposed by the 14th Army of the Leningrad Military District, Lieutenant General V.A. Frolova. Its formations and units were deployed along the section of the Soviet-Finnish border from the coast of the Barents Sea to Kestenga with a total length of about 550 km. The 14th Army included: the 14th Rifle Division (which later turned out to be in the direction of the main attack of the enemy and included the 95th, 135th, 325th Rifle, 241st Howitzer Artillery and 143rd Artillery Regiments), 52 1st division (which included the 58th, 112th and 205th rifle, 208th howitzer and 158th artillery regiments), 42nd rifle corps, which included the 122nd, 104th rifle, 1st tank divisions; 23rd fortified area and 1st mixed aviation division of two regiments.

Two divisions of the 14th Army (out of five) were deployed in the Murmansk direction. The right wing of the army, covering the Murmansk direction, supported

Northern Fleet. The forces of the army were mostly dispersed along the coast and the border. For example, the 14th Infantry Division was deployed along a 300-kilometer section of the border along the coast from Cape Svyatoy Nos to Kildin Island. Along the border, in the most important areas, at a distance of 1-3 kilometers from it, there were strongholds located at a distance of 2-5 kilometers from each other. Between them were mobile patrols. There were few fortifications in the area occupied by the army. Some of the troops were in positions, some were engaged in combat training.

The operational plan of the 14th Army had one weak point, which was not corrected until the very beginning of the war. They did not provide for a general army reserve, which could be maneuvered in support of the threatened direction. True, the commander of the army, Lieutenant General Frolov, having not achieved the approval of the reserve by the district headquarters, nevertheless created it in a rather original way.

On a whim, he took 2 tank battalions from the 1st Panzer Division, which had been transferred to Kandalaksha from Leningrad before the war. But there was nowhere to use tanks in a theater of operations that was completely unsuitable for them. The tanks, standing idle among the rocky tundra and dense forests, were eventually transferred back to Leningrad.

Some sections of the operational plan were not finally approved by the district headquarters. Until the war itself, the terms for the advancement of troops to defensive lines were not determined.

Also, the issue of the line of defense in the Kestenga direction was not resolved. The headquarters of the district, firmly adhering to the principle "we will not give an inch of our land to anyone," insisted on moving units to the very border. The army commander objected to this. He believed that it was more profitable to create a line of defense along the Sofienga River, fifty kilometers east of the border. Frolov was right. Wide Sofienga with lakes covering the flanks would be a powerful obstacle to the enemy. Closer to the border, there were no such lines convenient for defense at all. However, Frolov's considerations, of course, no one took into account

accepted. Forced to submit to the demands of his superiors, he reluctantly pushed one battalion to the border, maintaining the defensive line at Sofieng.

Frolov on the spot, of course, knew better where to build a defense. The very first battles fully confirmed his innocence. The enemy bypassed the battalion advanced forward, cut the road in the rear, and the fighters fought their way out of the encirclement with difficulty, leaving guns and convoys in the forests.

The mobilization plan of the army also had significant shortcomings. It was compiled according to the stereotypes of peacetime. It was difficult to understand why, following the good Soviet tradition, the army received reinforcements from the Urals, while the Arkhangelsk and Vologda regions, connected with the Kola Peninsula by a convenient sea route, sent people to other districts. This led to the fact that the army, which began fighting on June 29, began to receive mobilization reinforcements only in mid-July.

Tanks T-26 in the Arctic. The use of armored vehicles in the North was extremely limited by the terrain and the lack of roads.

Warehouses for weapons and uniforms for recruits were placed too close to the border. At one time, the army headquarters made a reasonable proposal - to pull the warehouses deeper to the rear, to the headquarters of the divisions. But this proposal, despite all its expediency, was rejected. As a result, everything had to be blown up during the retreat. The situation was once again brought to the point of absurdity, and as a result, the Northern Fleet helped a little with uniforms, and there were significant difficulties with weapons, especially in the first months of the war. Shortly before the start of the war, 100 earthen firing points for machine guns, 25 gun trenches, 7 trenches for rifle squads, 6 machine gun pillboxes were built. But the construction was not completed, the fortifications were not completed, in addition, enough crossings were not built, the roads had not been repaired for a long time.

In the Murmansk direction, there were 2 fortified areas - on the peninsulas Sredny and Rybachy (23rd UR) and Murmansk (26th UR). The Murmansk fortified area had several tower, anti-boat and anti-aircraft artillery batteries. Its purpose was to protect Murmansk from attacks by the enemy fleet. The purpose of the fortified area on the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas was to prevent amphibious landings. The defense of the peninsulas from land was somewhat simplified by the fact that it was possible to penetrate them from the mainland only through the southern isthmus of the Sredny Peninsula, along which the Musta-Tunturi ridge passed, which is a convenient natural defensive position. But according to the cover plan, no one defended him. All the forces of the URs were dispersed along the coastline and were supposed to prevent the landing of possible amphibious assault forces.

Thus, the grouping created by the enemy in the Murmansk direction was twice as strong as the units of the 14th Army opposing it, in addition, both German mountain divisions had combat experience and were prepared for combat operations in mountainous terrain, which gave them an additional advantage when operating on rocky plateau with a large number of hills 200-500 m high and a large number of large boulders, which was the theater of hostilities. In engineering terms, the combat area was not sufficiently fortified.

It turned out that the 14th Army, having enough forces to repel an enemy strike in the Murmansk direction, placed them in a configuration so unfavorable in operational and tactical terms that the Germans initially

they received an advantage, for the preservation of which it was enough for them simply not to disperse the forces available to them.

The enemy did not have an advantage either in tanks or in artillery, moreover, the lack of roads adjacent to the proposed theater of operations from Finnish territory made it difficult to supply the German group. The personnel units of the 14th and 52nd divisions were not much inferior in terms of combat training to the rangers. In fact, the enemy had one single advantage over the units of the Red Army opposing him: his plans corresponded to the real situation.

And as the events of the first months of the war showed, this advantage turned out to be quite enough for the fate of Murmansk and Polyarny to hang in the balance, and only a huge number of victims that could have been avoided, and the courage of tens of thousands of soldiers and commanders of the army and navy did not allow this advantage to turn into a catastrophe for the entire Murmansk direction.

the day before

(June 21-28)

The command of the 14th Army made its first attempt to influence the situation on the border only on June 21, the last peaceful day, when Lieutenant General Frolov applied for permission to move troops to the border and begin to occupy defensive lines. However, he received a ban "to carry out any activities that could arouse suspicion among the Finns and provoke them to war." However, at that time quite a few other commanders along the entire vast stretch of the state border received similar prohibitions ...

And again, without prior notice, under the guise of exercises, the army commander somewhat strengthened the threatened directions. Defensive lines began to be partially engaged. Even then, Frolov, understanding the key importance of the Titovka River, tried to do everything possible to reduce the threat of a breakthrough in this direction. Titovka, originating in Lake Laya, actually flows from south to north, deviating somewhat to the northeast in the lower reaches, and flows into Motovsky Bay. Along the upper reaches of the river, gradually deviating to the west; crossed the state border. Between the border and the river was the Titovsky fortified area, which had not yet been included in the cover plan. However, all of its fortifications were 6 unfinished and unarmed pillboxes in the area of Lake Kuosme-Jarvi. Behind the fortified area there were two crossings across Titovka - the southern one, which was also called the "southern bridge", and the northern one, made in the form of a dam. The terrain with a large number of hills in the area of the river, swamps and lakes on the way to it was convenient for defense.

By the evening of June 21, on the orders of Frolov, two battalions of the 95th joint venture of the 14th SD, Major General Zhurba, were advanced here. The third battalion was left in reserve, in the lower reaches of the river, covering the village of Titovka and the pier. In the village of Titovka

The operational group of the headquarters of the 44th Infantry Division, headed by the divisional commander Major General Zhurba, was located.

Although the 95th regiment was understaffed and had a smaller number than in wartime states, it was not this that played a fatal role even before the start of the defensive operation, but the inability of the division commander to correctly determine the threatened direction in his zone of responsibility.

The only dirt road that was available in the rear of the Soviet troops, passed in the lower reaches of the river, to the dam, where it forked. One branch went to the pier in the Malaya Volkova Bay and the nearby airfield under construction, the other to the Sredny Peninsula - along the western coast of the Motovsky Bay. There was no land road from Titovka to the army rear. The 95th regiment was supplied by sea. Unloading of everything necessary was carried out at the pier near the village of Titovka. The pier did not have anti-aircraft cover, and enemy aircraft could at any moment disorganize the supply of the regiment.

Shortly before the war, they began to build a road from Titovka to the Bolshaya Litsa River. But they managed to build only the South Bridge and only three kilometers of the way. The command of the division concluded that the Germans would seek to cut this only road in order to immediately, along the shortest path, go to the rear of the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas and cut them off from the front line.

In accordance with this plan, the concentration of the already meager forces allocated by the army commander, bypassing the instructions of the district headquarters, also took place.

Two rifle battalions stretched out in a line along the border, trying to cover a section of thirty kilometers - from the Malaya Volokovaya Bay of the Barents Sea to Lake Kuosme-Jarvi. Companies and platoons settled on separate heights. The gaps between them were sometimes so great that they were not shot through by machine-gun and rifle fire,

Another five kilometers to Lake Laya, in the area of the South Bridge, they were covered only by the rifle company of the reconnaissance battalion of the 14th division, which had several tankettes and armored vehicles, which, in essence, had nowhere to use.

On the western bank of the river, on both sides of the South Bridge, two artillery battalions of the 24th artillery regiment took up positions. Five days later, at the mouth of the river, where the pier was located, another division unloaded and occupied the positions intended for it, which already belonged to the 158th artillery regiment of the 52nd rifle division, which also began advancing to the border.

Not having the skills to equip positions in rocky ground, in the week at their disposal, the soldiers of the 95th SP equipped only small trenches for prone and kneeling firing, as well as shelters made of stones. In some places, wire fences were put up. Directly on the border line were three reinforced frontier outposts, each with 65-70 fighters. The terrain in the Arctic is difficult to access and has an extremely small number of roads. On Finnish territory, there were no roads at all in this section, which, oddly enough, served the mountain rangers in good stead. Lacking their traditional superiority in transport and military equipment, the Germans here also managed to create advantages in maneuverability. All subdivisions of the mountain divisions completely switched to pack traction.

On the night of June 21-22, 1941, during Operation Reindeer, formations and units of the Norway corps crossed the Norwegian-Finnish border and occupied the Pechenga region, capturing nickel mines.

In the first week of the war, the enemy ground forces on the Soviet-Finnish border were not active. Taking advantage of this, the commands of the 14th Army and the Northern Fleet took additional measures to strengthen the defense of the state border.

On June 22, the Military Council of the 14th Army ordered the transfer of the 325th regiment of the 14th division to the western coast of the Kola Bay. 52nd Division, commanded by

Major General Nikishin, stationed in Monchegorsk. Her transfer to Murmansk began on the evening of 24 June.

It was difficult to open trenches in the Arctic, and the soldiers had to use natural shelters.

The 325th regiment crossed the bay in a relatively calm situation, but the 75-kilometer crossing to the state border along the open tundra, with harassing enemy air raids, took several days. Only by the evening of June 28, the regiment occupied the defensive line.

On the evening of June 26, the 112th Rifle and 158th Artillery Regiments set out on a campaign, and the next morning, the 58th Rifle and 208th Howitzer Regiments. They were not moving as fast as they would like. Having crossed the Kola Bay, the regiments moved along the Mishukovskaya road to the west.

Parts of the 52nd Infantry Division slowly moved towards the border; on the way, and especially during the crossing through the Kola Bay, the division was repeatedly subjected to air raids and suffered losses. German aviation, based on Norwegian airfields, intensively bombed ships and columns moving towards the border. On June 30, the division deployed in battle formations on the Western Litsa River.

Loading onto ships that were not prepared for the transport of troops, crossing by sea, unloading, and walking along a single road, even without opposition from enemy aircraft, took a lot of time. Even in peacetime, the headquarters of the 14th Army persistently sought the construction of a bridge across the Tuloma River near the town of Kola. This would provide a through land connection from Murmansk to the border. But the bridge was never built.

The 23rd UR, located on the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas, included the 135th rifle and 104th cannon-artillery regiments, 2nd division

241st howitzer artillery regiment, 7th and 15th separate machine-gun battalions and coastal batteries of the Northern Fleet, but its forces were still dispersed along the coast to prevent amphibious landings. With the outbreak of hostilities, units of the fortified area occupied areas according to the combat schedule, that is, according to the approved cover plan.

And only on June 26, the army commander ordered the commander of the 135th rifle regiment to strengthen the cover of the peninsulas from land and push one battalion to the Musta-Tunturi ridge. Fulfilling the order, the 2nd battalion went to the indicated area, turned around and equipped trenches by the end of June 26.

During this week, the Northern Fleet managed to carry out mobilization and the first defensive measures under relatively favorable conditions. The 1st Northern Detachment of Border Vessels of the NKVD Marine Guard along with the coastal base in Kuvshinskaya Salma was introduced into the composition of the units of the protection of the water area of \u200b\u200bthe naval base (OVRa).

Due to the conversion of merchant and fishing vessels, the fleet was replenished with minesweepers, patrol ships, various boats and minelayers. From the recruited fishing trawlers, drifters and motorboats, two trawling divisions, two divisions of patrol ships, a division of minesweepers and a division of patrol boats were formed. In terms of the number of pennants, the OVR increased more than three times, and about the same

the number of personnel.

Since the beginning of the war, systematic aviation and ship reconnaissance by the forces of the Northern Fleet began to be carried out in the waters of the enemy, patrols were established on the approaches to ports and bases, and several defensive minefields were put up near their coast. Camping boats began to operate in positions off the Norwegian coast.

During the implementation of these measures, enemy aircraft provided strong opposition. In the early days of the war, Soviet fighter pilots had to make sorties several times a day. On June 24, the squadron commander Senior Lieutenant Safonov shot down the first German aircraft.

On the morning of June 27, the battalion commander from the left flank of the Titov fortified area called the headquarters of General Zhurba. He reported that enemy troops had appeared, approaching from the northwest and occupying their starting position on the very border. Zhurba called the army headquarters and asked permission to open an artillery FIRE.

- Do not hurry, - they answered at Frolov's headquarters, - there is no need to detect our artillery group ahead of time.

On June 28, the enemy continued to move closer to the border. Fog descended in the evening, but Soviet observers heard voices, the neighing of horses, and the clang of metal all night long.

Disaster on Titovka

(June 29)

At 04:20 on June 29, 1941, after an hour and a half of fire training, in which two artillery regiments participated with the support of aviation, the Norge mountain corps launched an attack on the defenders

along the Soviet-Finnish state border, the 6th and 7th border outposts of the 100th border detachment and parts of the 14th rifle division.

On this day, a strategic defensive operation began in the Arctic and Karelia, which continued until October 10, 1941.

The Germans immediately managed to develop a high rate of advance, despite the difficult terrain, and by evening they managed to advance to the Titovka River in its lower reaches. Titovka was an important strategic point, since, having crossed it, the enemy could cut off the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas. This was well understood by both sides. The battle for crossing the river was terrible.

At first, outwardly, nothing foreshadowed the catastrophic development of further events. At three o'clock in the morning the Germans opened rifle and machine-gun fire on our units. A shootout ensued. The shelling of the hills from machine guns and mortars did not bring any special results to the rangers. Soon the German artillery hit. The Soviet guns also spoke. The artillery battalions fired quickly at the clusters of huntsmen they discovered. The concentrated strike of two divisions came as a surprise to the Germans. As the prisoners captured a few hours later showed, artillery fire inflicted heavy losses on the Germans.

Under the cover of fog, the Germans tried to cross the river on the left flank, where they were generally not expected. This was announced by phone by the commander of the reconnaissance battalion, who was in the combat formations of his rifle company.

The attack by fighters in advantageous positions was repulsed without much difficulty. Several prisoners were captured, according to whose testimony it was established that units of the 138th regiment of the 3rd mountain division were operating against the reconnaissance battalion.

At 8 o'clock in the morning, when the fog cleared, enemy aircraft appeared over the battlefield. The Germans responded to the concentrated strikes of the artillery battalions with no less concentrated air strikes. La-87 stormed the positions of the reconnaissance battalion and bombed artillery divisions.

Telephone communications with the left flank were interrupted, and radio communications soon ceased.

The telephone line connecting the divisional headquarters with the right flank was still in operation. At 10 o'clock a report from battalion commander-1 was received from there: a company located on the western slope of the Musta-Tunturi ridge entered the battle.

By this time, Major General Zhurba began to realize that the direction of the main attack of the enemy was determined incorrectly, and in order to clarify the situation, he decided to head to the left flank.

Despite the fact that this decision of Zhurba was criticized by many authors, it is possible that it was the only correct one. Even before the enemy brought the main forces into battle, Zhurba felt that the division was in danger of being defeated and that the fate of the battle was being decided on the left flank.

Subsequent events showed that he was absolutely right. But only after the war it became known that one of the battalions of the 2nd echelon of the 137th regiment of the 2nd mountain division received the task of reaching the rear of the regiment's positions across the Titovskoye Lake area, capturing the South Bridge and, after receiving support from units of the 138th regiment, 3rd mountain division to continue the offensive from the rear to encircle units of the 14th division ...

General Zhurba handed over the leadership of the battle with the command post of the division to the commander of the 95th joint venture, Major Chernov, since the division chief of staff, shortly before the start of the German offensive, fell ill and left for Murmansk, and he himself, together with the division artillery commander and adjutant, got into a car and went to the left flank. On the way, seeing that enemy aircraft were bombing the South Bridge almost continuously, he ordered the commanders of the two artillery battalions who were here to move, while the bridge was intact, to the eastern bank of the river.

But it was not possible to drive far from the bridge, the dive bombers bombed the headquarters car, which was reported by the driver who returned to the command post of the division. He said that all the passengers of the car were killed, after which the command of the division was taken by the head of the political department of the division, regimental commissar Volkov.

However, Zhurba did not die during the bombing. Together with the adjutant, senior lieutenant Abramov, he tried to break into the position of reconnaissance battalion, which, most likely, he succeeded.

When it turned out that the Germans were carrying out a maneuver to encircle, the Major General, with the fighters he had gathered and the remnants of equipment, started a battle in the area of the South Bridge with the rangers of the 137th regiment who had broken through there. The battle was actually surrounded, reinforcements approached the Germans, and it was not possible to establish contact with parts of the division. This was later reported by Abramov, who was taken prisoner during the battle and released from it in 1944 in Norway.

By evening, the position of the division worsened.

The right-flank 1st battalion of the 95th SP was forced to fight with the 136th regiment of the 2nd German mountain division, which gradually brought all three of its battalions into battle during the day. And if at first the battalion repelled attacks and even captured prisoners, then after the enemy reached a 3-fold superiority, it began to back away and retreated a couple of kilometers, clinging to the Musta-tunturi ridge. The situation in the battalion was catastrophic. Almost all the commanders were knocked out, thinned platoons and companies were commanded by sergeants, supply managers and even doctors. The battalion commander survived, despite the fact that he received 10 wounds.

With the second battalion the situation was similar. The 137th regiment acted against him, although not at full strength, since one of his battalions, in cooperation with the 138th regiment of the neighboring 3rd mountain division, surrounded the reconnaissance battalion of the 14th division and tried to capture the South Bridge.

Not having achieved overwhelming numerical superiority, the Germans pulled here with the help of pack horses part of the divisional artillery and flamethrowers. As a result, the 2nd battalion was also cut off, lost contact with the regimental headquarters and the task force of the division headquarters, and was forced to begin a retreat.

It was not possible to establish contact with the reconnaissance battalion, and in his report to the commander of the army, regimental commissar Volkov concluded that the reconnaissance battalion was surrounded and destroyed, and the 2nd battalion was also surrounded, there was no connection with it, and it is obvious that its destruction is only a matter of time.

According to the regimental commissar, 2 German divisions acted against the 95th regiment, and one of them was engaged in the fact that, grinding the remnants of the battalions and capturing the South Bridge, went to the rear of the division.

It was impossible to check the accuracy of the information, since they could not get through to the battalions from the division headquarters.

And although the 112th regiment of the 52nd division, which was closest to the battlefield, hurried there with all its might, leaving a convoy and even artillery behind it, the army commander, who had neither operational nor tactical reserves, decided to keep for these purposes although would be the remnants of the 95th regiment.

Therefore, he ordered the withdrawal of the regiment, without bringing the 3rd battalion, which was in reserve, into battle. In the evening, the 1st battalion of the regiment blew up the dam and began to retreat in an organized manner in the direction indicated to it to the Zapadnaya Litsa River. The retreat of the rest of the division very quickly turned into a stampede. Automobile transport of the 14th division, one artillery battalion and part of the horse transport, sent to the Sredny Peninsula, could not go there - the road was clogged with retreating troops. Rumors constantly circulated that the rangers had cut the road ahead.

The equipment and guns were abandoned, part of the personnel surrendered, part along the road (the Germans were able to cut it only in the morning of the next day) and off-road, a few days later, scattered to Zapadnaya Litsa and the Kola Bay.

The 2nd battalion, which actually did not already have commanders and communications, having learned that the neighbors were retreating after the end of the battle to their right, also began a disorderly retreat.

Meanwhile, on the left flank of the reconnaissance battalion, among which were General Zhurba and adjutant Senior Lieutenant Abramov, they fought a stubborn battle with the enemy for the South Bridge, being completely surrounded. Until the evening they were supported by artillery divisions of the 241st artillery regiment, but then,

having received an order to withdraw, they withdrew from their positions and, moving off-road, also began to abandon equipment. Only 5 howitzers were delivered to Zapadnaya Litsa on tractors.

In shallow trenches, the soldiers suffered heavy losses.

Behind the village of Titovka, not far from the pier, there was an airfield, built by the forces of prisoners, who were mainly engaged in earthworks. The only road was clogged with retreating troops. The guards from the NKVD troops until the last remained at the location of the airfield, hoping to withdraw about fifty vehicles that were under construction.

The Germans, who quickly advanced to this place after the withdrawal of the 1st battalion, unexpectedly ran into the guards of the airfield and started a fight with her. Only after that the prisoners were allowed to leave after the retreating troops. And several hundred prisoners reached Zapadnaya Litsa in good order,

than retreating troops. They even helped to bring some of the cars along the road clogged with the retreating to the Bolshaya Litsa trading post, on which for the most part they got there. Their further fate was relatively favorable. From Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, they were evacuated by ship to Polyarny, where most of them, taking into account the statements they had written, were sent to the front in September as part of the division of the people's army that was being formed in Murmansk.

militia.

Airfield security was less fortunate. Having no experience of military operations, she was rather quickly pushed back by the Germans from the airfield and dispersed, part of her was surrounded and destroyed in the village of Titovka (where the Chekists retreated, not knowing that the rear and headquarters units had already left her), part managed to retreat along the hills.

And the battle at the South Bridge continued until late at night. The nights in the North are bright in summer, but, taking advantage of the fog that thickened near the river, the Germans were finally able to destroy the armored cars and floating tanks of the reconnaissance battalion that hindered their advance, and by 3 o'clock occupied the bridge.

The last surviving defenders of the bridge, among whom was Zhurba's adjutant st. Lieutenant Abramov, were captured. From his testimony, given at the command post of the 2nd Mountain Division a day later, it followed that
What:

"The place of his service is the headquarters of the 14th Infantry Division, and he himself is the adjutant of the commander of the 14th Infantry Division, Major General Shurba [Zhurba], who died in battle." Most likely, Zhurba was buried there by the soldiers of his division. On the battlefield, the Germans could only find his overcoat ...

Disabled equipment of the reconnaissance battalion. In the foreground is a B-10 armored car, followed by a T-37 amphibious tank.

Of all the units of the 14th division that took part in the battle, only the 1st battalion of the 95th joint venture came to the coast of the Kola Bay in an organized manner.

The rest of the units came out randomly, in groups of 20-30 people, many did not have weapons with them. The panic among the retreating units was evident even to the naval authorities, who were watching the withdrawal from the side. As the commander of the Northern Fleet Golovko wrote in his diary:

"It is clear that the state of people is depressed. Everyone is exhausted, hungry, many without weapons, combat capability is lost. Others, having reached our batteries, declared to the Red Navy anti-aircraft gunners that the Germans would be here in two hours.

There is a lack of people capable of putting things in order. "His strength", "He beats, you can't resist", "Let's transport to the other side! .." - these are the conversations among the retreating. We must not let the panic spread, we must help the army team

strike at the enemy from ships.

First rebuff

(June 29-30)

Having dropped the Soviet units from Titovka, the Germans, in turn, made a major mistake - instead of swiftly reaching Zapadnaya Litsa before a defensive line was erected along it, the enemy decided to break through to the Sredny Peninsula on the move.

But there was no solid defense not only on the Western Face - the Polyarny defensive structures from the land side also did not have. But the Germans, instead of reaching the rear of the main base of the fleet, preferred to round off their coastal flank and break through, if not to Rybachy, then at least to Sredny ..

On the southern isthmus of the Sredniy Peninsula, since June 26, only the 2nd Battalion of the 135th Rifle Regiment has occupied the defense. But the commandant of the fortified area, Colonel Krasilnikov, managed to figure out the change in the operational situation in time and transferred part of the forces of the fortified area from the coast, where, according to the staff habit that had survived right up to the middle of 1942, in a dispersed state, they were waiting for German landings from the sea to the southern isthmus, and managed to cover it just to the appearance of rangers on it. On his orders, the 1st battalion of the 135th joint venture was sent to help the units of the fortified area from Rybachy, which managed to get to the isthmus by the beginning of clashes with the rangers and at 5.00 in the morning took up defense to the left of the 2nd battalion. A little later, combat order No. 1 of the commander of the 14th army was issued, with which the 135th joint venture and the 15th machine-gun battalion were transferred to the isthmus. As a result, the machine-gun battalion and the rest of the units of the 135th regiment did not have time to catch up to the isthmus by the start of hostilities.

The rangers of the 136th Mountain Rifle Regiment of the 2nd Mountain Division at about 6 a.m. on the move tried to capture the isthmus with forward detachments, without wasting time pulling up mortars and mountain artillery, but were pressed to the ground by dense machine-gun fire. By 10 o'clock in the morning the huntsmen had stopped their attacks and more

were not in a hurry.

Machine-gun crew takes position.

After that, for several hours, both sides pulled up the units on the march and accumulated strength. The approaching 3rd battalion of the 135th joint venture occupied the Central height, forming the 2nd echelon of the regiment's defense. Regimental artillery was advanced to the junctions of the battalions of the first echelon, combat interaction was established with the attached batteries of the 104th cannon and the 2nd division of the 241st howitzer artillery regiments, and between the first and second echelons mortar units and an anti-aircraft machine gun company of the regiment were placed.

With the approach in the middle of the day of the main forces of the 136th mountain rifle regiment, the onslaught

the huntsmen resumed. Having clarified the location of the Soviet units during the concentration and identified weaknesses in their defense, the rangers began stubborn attacks, mainly on the positions of the 2nd battalion, which did not have enough time to equip positions.

Conducting heavy fire from mortars and mountain guns delivered in packs, the rangers managed to wedge between the 5th and 6th companies. The position of the 5th company was the most heavy.

She got into a semicircle and was forced to retreat with a fight. During the retreat, the company commander, Lieutenant Avakov, was seriously wounded.

The regiment commander Pashkovsky managed to avoid the temptation to bring the second echelon battalion into battle. Even before the start of the battle, he managed to send a reconnaissance platoon of Lieutenant Kurnosov to the rear of the enemy, who, upon returning from the mission, having suffered heavy losses, was forced to break through the forces of rangers, which were 5 times superior in number, but managed to deliver data on the number of Germans, the direction of their movement and number of heavy weapons.

Based on the data received, he managed to competently organize a counterattack. Supporting the 5th company, which had suffered significant losses, with a platoon of Lieutenant Barbolin, expelled from his reserve, he ordered a strike on the flank of the advancing rangers with the forces of two platoons of the 6th company.

From the front, the attack was supported by Barbolin's platoon and the 5th company, commanded by political instructor Barkhanov. The position has been restored. Until the very evening, the huntsmen tried to throw the battalions of the regiment off the isthmus, but they did not succeed. could.

The polar night made it quite possible to continue hostilities at night, but the Germans, who continued all night to fight with the group of General Zhurba near the South

bridge over Titovka, did not have enough strength to deliver a decisive blow. At night, both sides again began to pull up forces to the battlefield.

At the disposal of Pashkovsky, the 55th and 56th separate machine-gun companies, staffed by 2/3, were received, and the combined battalion of Major Kalenikov, formed from the personnel of the 100th border detachment, was placed under temporary subordination. On the morning of June 30, the concentrating chasseurs were dealt a fire attack by the ships of the Northern Fleet (it will be discussed below), after which the Germans were able to go on the offensive only in the afternoon, again inflicting the main blow on the positions of the 2nd battalion. But by this time, a 3-tier well-thought-out system for the location of fire weapons had already been created on the isthmus, placed due to the lack of defensive structures in natural shelters.

The Germans did not become involved in protracted battles and lose precious time, during which defensive lines were erected in the Murmansk direction and fresh units were brought up. The section of the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas turned out to be the first in the Murmansk direction where the front stabilized and remained in this position during all the long war years, right up to the transition of the Soviet troops to the offensive. The 135th SP remained invariably on the peninsula. On July 31, 1942, it was transformed into the 254th Separate Marine Brigade, which became part of the Northern Defensive Region, formed on the basis of the 23rd Fortified Region.

(30 June)

And just a few hours later, on the morning of June 30, the 112th regiment of the 52nd division, which reached from Bolshaya Litsa to Titovka in less than 12 hours, stumbled upon the advanced barriers of rangers three kilometers behind the South Bridge and took up defense until the situation was clarified.

The battalion of Captain Moskovsky, being in the lead detachment of the regiment, was the first to approach the South Bridge on the Titovka River. Here he came face to face with the enemy. Jaegers attacked him on the move, trying to throw him back, but were stopped by rapid fire. The regiment commander, Major Korotkov, immediately arrived at the scene of the battle, but he barely had time to clarify the combat mission of the battalion, when 1-87 appeared in the air. They subjected the positions of the battalion to bombardment and machine-gun fire.

Meanwhile, the main forces of the regiment were already advancing into the battle area. They also came under air attack. Artillery also suffered significant damage: it was difficult for it to get off the road and hide among rocks and stones. Nevertheless, the regiment took up defensive positions at a favorable line.

In front of the Moscow battalion, the situation became more complicated again. After another bombardment from the air, huntsmen appeared from behind the stones. They moved forward in small bursts, carefully camouflaged. But the soldiers of the battalion, who were in an advantageous position, showed restraint and let the rangers a hundred meters away. And those, apparently unable to accurately determine the number of defending units of the battalion, suddenly went on the attack.

On command, rapid fire was again opened from behind the rocks and boulders.

The huntsmen lay down. In the order of the battalion, which did not have snipers, there were, however, a large number of trained "excellent shooters" trained to hit important targets. At this distance, their fire was effective.

Having suffered significant losses in officers, the Germans rolled back and again called in aviation. While she stormed the positions of the battalion, the rangers brought up mortars. And then they resumed promotion.

Several hours of intense fighting passed. Now the enemy approached the positions of the battalion closely. Here and there, hand-to-hand fights broke out from time to time. Gradually, the companies of the regiment began to thin out.

Under these conditions, the regiment commander had to choose one of two things: either continue the battle and lose all the people without a trace, or evade enemy attacks and withdraw the battalion to the next line.

The task assigned to the 112th regiment, however, did not allow Korotkov to start a withdrawal without the permission of the senior commander. And there was no communication with the division headquarters. The radio operators were exhausted, but the division headquarters did not answer. But the army headquarters responded. I had to report to the chief of staff Skvirsky. The colonel understood everything, but did not give the order and wanted to get the sanction of the commander.

Another hour has passed. The situation for the regiment became more and more difficult. But then finally got permission to leave.

They departed in a roll. At the 72nd kilometer, the regiment was again bombed and attacked by aircraft. Under her cover, units of rangers managed to cling to the height of 244.0 with a roundabout throw. Its gray treeless peak with black cracks, in some places still covered with snow, dominated the surrounding area.

Height 244.0 was the most advantageous point of the terrain, where it was possible to delay the advance of the rangers along the Mishukovskaya road, from here the column route through the mouth of the Western Litsa to Ura-Guba was also controlled.

Major Korotkov decided that it was necessary to hold out here to the last, and on his own initiative stopped the retreat of the regiment. In the direction of height 244.0, a strong barrier was set up and several reconnaissance groups were sent out. At the same time, the regiment tried by all means to contact the division and sent messengers to it. Soon the scouts reported that the enemy, as his units approached, was hastily occupying the defense. At the top of the height, an observation post was spotted, connected to the rear by wires. The enemy, apparently, did not think of attacking yet, but intensified the fire from wandering mortars, which caused a lot of anxiety.

In addition to mines, several explosions of artillery shells were noted. This was alarming and was evidence that the enemy was in a hurry to bring up artillery, which had lagged behind the warheads. As before, German aircraft bombed.

Korotkov plunged headlong into work, preparing a decision to master the height. It was necessary to capture it before the approach of the main German forces, while the huntsmen only think about continuing the offensive and do not create defensive positions.

The idea of a frontal attack on the steepest eastern slope was abandoned. According to the reports of the scouts, the enemy was continuously monitoring the slope. Consequently, it will not be possible to achieve surprise here. The greatest success was promised by covering actions in the direction of the northern and southern slopes of the height.

A problem arose when it came to calculating firepower: there was almost no artillery left in the regiment. It was impossible to count on any artillery preparation, even in the direction of action of one battalion. It was possible to help the infantry only with the fire of a small number of 82-mm battalion and 50-mm company mortars.

The regiment commander was preparing to use all available forces for the battle, including the reconnaissance company, which reinforced the Moskovsky battalion. They were supposed to strike the main blow on the northeastern slope of the height. The major himself was going to lead the 2nd Battalion's distraction attack on the southern slope of the hill.

The regimental commander gathered the subunit commanders, set combat missions, discussed which approaches should be used to reach the attack line unnoticed, stressed that the rangers are afraid of hand-to-hand combat, so it should be imposed on them, that a strike without artillery support requires special speed, organization, courage and high combat impulse of the attacking chains.

Fighters are firing, using numerous boulders as shelters. The commissar of the division, Orlov, who arrived at the regiment, recorded in his report the final words of Korotkov:

"No matter how hard it will be for us, we must be on top. And for this we need to inspire the fighters, instill in them faith in our strength, in success. If enemy bullets pin us to the ground, the commanders and political workers must rise first and lead the fighters to storm. I will go with the attacking chain. I demand the same from you".

On July 2, hiding between the stones, in the low birch thickets, the soldiers of two battalions of the 112th Infantry Regiment began advancing to the lines of attack.

The scouts played the role of guides, led the fighters to their original positions and helped to quietly install mortars.

After the 1st battalion took up positions, the reconnaissance company of senior lieutenant Galchuk, as the most prepared, began to perform a roundabout maneuver, and the battalions began mortar shelling and went on the attack.

The battle immediately took on a fierce character. Although the enemy fire was strong, the fighters managed to reach the positions of the rangers with a throw. But here a hitch arose: the slope of the height, hitherto rather gentle, at the very positions turned out to be steeper than it seemed from a distance. Moving was extremely difficult. German grenades flew from above. The companies lay low: it was, at first glance, impossible to overcome the slope without suppressing the enemy's firing points.

Height attack.

Galchuk's scouts faced the same problem.

Then Galchuk made an extraordinary decision: to push one squad to the eastern, steep slopes of the height and put a smoke screen there, while simultaneously demonstrating the main blow. This could be used to rush the reconnaissance company forward, bypassing the steepness, along an area that was well shot through, but because of this it was unexpected for an attack.

It took about half an hour to set up a smoke screen.

The trick worked. As expected, the pedantic Germans concentrated all the power of their fire on the smoke screen. Heavy mortars, machine guns, and even rangers' submachine guns pounded on the rocks and stones, from where the scouts had already managed to retreat. In the meantime, the enemy was hitting an empty place, a platoon of Lieutenant Mukhin bypassed the smoke area and attacked the enemy from the flank, capturing two prisoners in the process. The firing points of the rangers began to fall silent one after another.

In the midst of the battle, a German light machine gun unexpectedly hit the positions already captured by the scouts. Mukhin with a detachment of fighters managed to covertly bypass him from the rear. At the last moment, the German machine gunners, however, managed to turn around and open fire from personal weapons.

Mukhin was killed, but the machine gun was captured.

During the battle, a turning point occurred. Following Mukhin's platoon, the entire reconnaissance company was launched into the attack. With a shout of "Hurrah" the scouts rushed to the heights. After the structure of their defense on the northern flank was destroyed, the rangers did not accept hand-to-hand combat and began to withdraw, suffering heavy losses. Captain Moscow lost no time and threw the whole battalion forward.

And then went on the attack and the 2nd battalion. Soon the battle spread to the reverse slopes of the height. And after another hour of battle, height 244.0 was completely cleared of the enemy. The exact losses suffered by the 112th regiment during the assault on the heights are unknown. But only the reconnaissance company of Galchuk lost 25 people: 6 of them were killed and 19 were wounded. He was mortally wounded and Captain Moskovsky, Regiment Commander Major Korotkov, who also reached the crest of the height with the 2nd battalion, was wounded in the right hand.

The capture of height 244.0 significantly improved the position of the 112th regiment, delaying the advance of parts of the German mountain corps for three days. During this time, the main forces of the 52nd division reached the eastern bank of the Zapadnaya Litsa River, deployed to

on a wide front and took up defensive positions in advantageous positions, intercepting the main directions.

Strike from the sea

(30 June)

On the evening of June 29, the criticality of the situation in the Far North was assessed in Moscow itself. The Armed Forces of the Northern Fleet received a radiogram from People's Commissar of the Navy Kuznetsov, ordering "to ensure the immediate exit of the ships of the Northern Fleet to Motovsky Bay and to support the army until the last moment." Apparently, the instant massacre of the Germans with the 14th division made a strong impression on the Headquarters, which was aggravated by the complete absence of tanks and even medium artillery among the Germans in this sector of the front. After the telegram from the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Northern Fleet, he decided to support the ground units defending the Sredny and Rybachy peninsulas with naval artillery fire. For this purpose, a detachment of ships was formed, which included destroyers "Uritsky" (commander 3rd rank captain Kruchinin) and "Valerian Kuibyshev" (commander senior lieutenant Maksimov), security boats MO No. 121 (boat commander Lieutenant Krol) and MO No. 123 (commander Lieutenant Lozovsky). The detachment was led by the commander of the 2nd destroyer division, captain of the 2nd rank Simonov. The flagship gunner of the fleet, Captain 2nd Rank Barinov, came out with him. The duties of the deputy political officer of the detachment were assigned to the political officer of the destroyer brigade Kazakov.

Above the ships were to carry out a permanent barrage 4 I-153 of the 3rd IAE 72 SAP.

Gun crews of the destroyer "Valerian Kuibyshev" are preparing to open fire. The ships arrived in their assigned area by six o'clock in the morning. Sea hunters immediately transferred to the shore the correction posts taken from the Kuibyshev and Uritsky in advance under the general command of Lieutenant Peskov, equipped with radio stations. The spotters, having taken an advantageous position, established contact with the army command and clarified the targets for the ships.

At six o'clock in the morning, having received accurate target designation data, the destroyers opened fire on enemy positions. Each volley was immediately corrected by coastal posts. Intensive shelling lasted 3 hours and 15 minutes. Two enemy batteries were destroyed and suppressed - artillery and mortar, four points of concentration of his troops were covered. After a message about this, transmitted by corrective posts, the destroyers developed full rate of fire.

The destroyer "Valerian Kuibyshev", maneuvering in the bays of Kutovaya and Motka, fired at firing points and concentrations of enemy troops found on the slopes of the mountains. Having fired up to three hundred high-explosive fragmentation shells, the ship suppressed several firing points and destroyed about two hundred enemy soldiers and officers.

The destroyer Uritsky, carrying the battalion commander's sail pennant, approached two hours later, maneuvered in Motka Bay and fired at the rangers at 4 points of their concentration.

As a result, the rangers, who pulled up artillery during the bright polar night,

concentrated for decisive strikes on the isthmus and waiting for the fog to begin to dissipate, unexpectedly came under fire from 102-mm destroyer guns. The German detachments had the worst of it, trying in the morning fog to make a detour along the steep slopes of Hill 122, along the edge of the Kutova Bay. On the long rocky slopes of the height, open from the sea, there was absolutely nowhere to hide from artillery fire.

It became impossible to attack and even fire on Soviet positions in such an environment. The firing points, detected by flashes, were covered one after another. Suffering heavy losses, the huntsmen began frantically to call in aircraft. The aircraft arrived at the beginning of the 10th, when the fog had already sufficiently moved away from the coast. 15 71-88 participated in the raid. The destroyers were forced to stop shelling and move away from the coast to the fog zone. Conducting anti-aircraft fire and maneuvering at high speeds, the destroyers left along the Motovsky Bay to the exit from it in order to take cover in the fog thickly creeping over the sea.

The obsolete I-153 "seagull" biplanes covering the ships did not have much success, they could not shoot down anyone and, if possible, tried to make it difficult for the Junkers to make targeted bombing.

"Junkers" over the Arctic.

The "Junkers" worked from a gentle dive, links, going along the ships from the stern, and dropped, according to ship observation posts, about 80 bombs.

Since the Il-88s had a relatively low dive speed, the destroyers managed to quite successfully evade their attacks by turning at full speed. There were no direct hits on any ship. However, several bombs sprinkled fragments of the Uritsky's stern, damaging the stern guns and the torpedo tube. The calculations of the stern guns were partially disabled. Of the servants of the stern gun of the main caliber, only the first gunner, foreman of the 1st article Sukhov, remained in the ranks.

While the Junkers were chasing the destroyers leaving for the fog, sea hunters began to remove correction posts from the shore. The last group was filmed by MO No. 121 under the command of Lieutenant Krol. The Germans, however, had serious plans for the destroyers and scrambled another group of bombers into the air. Following the first group of bombers, the second group began to approach Motovsky Bay, this time consisting of 18 Li-87s. At this time, the destroyers finally hid in the fog, but the dive-bombers, who had gone back, noticed the departing sea hunters and headed towards them. MO No. 123 also managed to get to the fog, and MO No. 121 was attacked by all 18 74-87.

Sailors of the small hunter MO-121 after the battle on June 30, 1941. From left to right B.N. Vekshin, D.F. Rulev, A.P. Mikhailenko, I.P. Svistunov, L.I. Panchenko.

A battle began, unprecedented in the inequality of the forces participating in it. The fighters could not have any influence on the course of the battle. The battle took place in full view of the VNOS posts of the Sredny Peninsula, which reported it to the headquarters of the Federation Council. On alarm, two more pairs of "gulls" from the reserve of the 72nd SAP were raised, but they could not drive the "Junkers" away from the boat.

The commander of the boat, Lieutenant Krol, understood that his salvation was only in maneuver. The boat did not stay on the same course for a minute, turning almost as fast as the destroyers, but much more steeply - Krol skillfully used the only, but unique advantage of the sea hunter: a combination of high, up to 30

knots of speed, which he was helped to develop by three motors, with very good maneuverability, which was provided by a small draft.

The Germans, as always attacking the stern, were puzzled by such high maneuverability and, too carried away, attacked with an extremely low dive speed, releasing brake bars for this and dropping bombs as low as possible. The Germans did not pay much attention to the fighters, who did not yet have the necessary experience and rather stupidly rushing around, simply not letting them get close. But then the gunners of the boat had their say, the team of which was well trained and worked smoothly. The Northern Fleet was generally famous for the quality of training of specialists in sailor specialties, who had been trained for more than one year and who then lost so many, giving them up to the marines due to ill-conceived decisions of the command.

One of the Junkers, which came out of a dive too low, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire from a boat; after the war, the type (L-87 V2) and serial number (! 1pg.5878) of this machine were established. Another dive-bomber was damaged by shrapnel from his own bomb.

However, targeted bombing disabled the steering, and the boat was controlled only by cars. But the Germans no longer dived so low and acted only at high speed, removing the brake bars. Maneuvering machines is much slower than steering. The bomb explosions were gradually getting closer. One motor, and then another failed. The boat could no longer turn to the sides even with the help of propellers, but only changed the direction of travel, now giving a full forward, then sharply stopping or giving reverse. From close explosions of bombs, the boat, which had a small draft, was sometimes completely pushed out of the water.

To top it all off, the Germans smashed the stern, but they could not finally disable the last engine, which had already significantly lost power. The "Junkers" flew away only almost half an hour later, having completely used up the available ammunition. The sea hunter on one barely working motor managed to get to the port of Vladimir.

After the battle, Lieutenant Krol, who contacted the headquarters of the Federation Council by phone, was in a state of severe mental stress after the battle. For some reason, he spoke in a whisper, and at the proposal of the division commander, captain of the 3rd rank Valchuk, to send a serviceable sea hunter after him to tow the boat to the base, he answered:

- They will notice and begin to bomb again. Why put a second boat under attack? I'd rather wait for the fog and then I'll come myself ...

This unprecedented case did not go unnoticed even amid the enormous difficulties and tragedies of the first days of the war. By a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated July 14, 1941, the commander of the boat MO No. 121, Lieutenant Iosif Aizikovich Krol and the assistant commander, Lieutenant Alexander Vladimirovich Borodavko, as well as the steering foreman of the 2nd article Boris Nikolaevich Vekshin were awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

1st offensive on Zapadnaya Litsa

(July 3-8)

Departed by order of the commander of the 52nd SD Nikishin from the South Bridge, the 112th SP took up positions along the western bank of Zapadnaya Litsa. The battalions were spread over twelve kilometers in height. The right flank of the regiment passed close to the fishing trading post Bolshaya Litsa - at the mouth of the river. With the left flank, the regiment commander, Major Korotkoe, covered the bridge from which the Mishukovskaya road began. The rest of the rifle regiments, which had pulled up, took up defense along the eastern bank: the 58th - from the bridge to the south, the 205th - to the right of it. Artillery regiments formed two support groups: the northern one, in the area of the bridge, and the southern one, on the Mishukovskaya road.

The anti-aircraft division covered the southern group and the command post of the division located here. Artillerymen began topographical binding of batteries. And then it turned out that large-scale maps were available only for the northern part of the defensive area. In addition, it turned out that the magnetic needles of the compass deviate strongly from normal readings. One of the commanders, who worked here as a geologist before being drafted into the army, remembered that there were ores nearby that caused a magnetic anomaly. The head of the division's artillery, Colonel Kubeev, called the army headquarters and asked them to find a map of the reference topographic grid in Murmansk. The card was found and sent. Accurate shooting data was provided shortly before the resumption of hostilities by the Germans.

Battered by the artillery fire of the ships while trying to break through to the Sredny Peninsula, the huntsmen quickly regrouped, and the German command began to correct the mistakes made. Attempts to break through Sredny, supported by destroyer fire and having its own coastal batteries, to Rybachy meant the loss of precious time.

Aerial reconnaissance has already reported that on June 30, construction began on a defensive line covering Polyarny from land and coastal batteries at Cape Set Navolok. And the Germans redirected their forces to the Murmansk direction. And the front line on the isthmus of the Sredny Peninsula was destined to remain unchanged until 1944.

The fighting on Bolshaya Litsa began on July 3rd. The advanced 112th Rifle Regiment, which had a too extended line of defense, repeatedly launched counterattacks, but was nevertheless gradually pushed back to the river. The situation was not corrected either by two detachments of volunteer sailors landing on the flanks of the regiment, numbering 600 and 800 people, or by fire support from the ships of the Northern Fleet.

After a fierce battle with enemy aircraft on June 30 in Motovsky Bay and the complete helplessness of the Northern Fleet aviation shown during it, the command of the Northern Fleet no longer risked sending destroyers to fire support for units of the 14th Army. Therefore, the task of fire support from the sea was now assigned to the ships of the OVR. Having waited for non-flying weather, which, thank God, often happened in the North, the Smerch and Groza patrol ships, accompanied by sea hunters, who, in the presence of trained crews, showed an unexpectedly high resistance to air raids, made their way to Motovsky Bay and began to fire at enemy positions from their 102 mm guns.

There was little sense in this, since the guards had only two 102-mm guns, and the correction posts after the memorable incident with MO No. 121 were more

they did not land, because, as it was politically correct indicated in official papers, such a landing "in the conditions of mountainous terrain was extremely difficult to carry out." In the absence of adjustments, the effectiveness of artillery fire from long distances was naturally low ..

No better, the situation was with the first detachments of marines formed in the fleet. The first detachment of marines, numbering 600 people, was formed in just 2 hours. Political workers were engaged in the formation of the detachment, that is, it was preparing completely thoughtlessly. The political instructors, striving to include as many communists and Komsomol members as possible in it, thoughtlessly wrote off the best qualified specialists from the ships, sailors of the 4th and 5th years of service, whose training took more than one year.

What will happen when untrained sailors begin to take part in hostilities, the political department of the fleet, of course, did not imagine at all. And only later did the political workers discover that "the most detrimental thing in the detachments was the fear of moving around by bending down or crawling. Only in full growth! .." After the first detachment, which had no combat training for ground combat operations, suffered huge losses, the second detachment, numbering 800 people, had already been formed for 2 days. However, little has changed from this. Again, the best personnel of the fleet were thrown into the inferno: submariners and sailors of surface ships, various coastal defense and naval aviation specialists, builders and ship repairmen, instructors of naval schools of the fleet training detachment.

A couple of days later, the formation of marine detachments from volunteers was discontinued. By this time, the number of applications submitted to them has exceeded 12,000.

There were simply not enough weapons for the detachments assembled by the fleet. It was mined in various ways - about 3,000 rifles were delivered from Moscow by a detachment of transport aviation under the command of the famous pilot, Hero of the Soviet Union Valentina Grizodubova. All small arms were seized from the ships, except for the pistols of ship commanders and heavy machine guns. All machine guns were removed from submarines, and some were taken from naval aviation. There was also a lack of equipment, in connection with which another exceptional step was taken - "extra" uniforms and equipment were collected from officers and old-timers.

The untrained detachments of sailors, despite their daring and courage, were unable to rectify the situation. The thinned marines were transferred to the isthmus of the Sredny Peninsula, where they took up defensive positions on the Musta Tunturi ridge section.

Unable to withstand, despite the support of the sailors, the onslaught of superior enemy forces, after 3 days of fighting, the battered 112th SP, having blown up the bridge, in the morning of July 5 organizedly retreated to the east coast and made up the reserve of the division, located behind the junction of the 205th and 58th regiments. One of his battalions went on the defensive on the right flank of the 205th regiment, where before that there were only rare observation posts for five kilometers. At the same time, the outposts of the 58th Infantry Regiment withdrew.

The almost 20-kilometer front of the division's defense was very loosely occupied. The battalions of the first echelon were stretched out in line and had no reserves. The maneuver was difficult due to the lack of roads. Off-road impeded organizing the supply of units. The units located to the south were in a more advantageous position: they had the opportunity to use the Mishukovskaya road. But there were no branches from it to the front, and on the approach to the bridge the enemy had a good view of the road.

The proximity to the Mishukovskaya road, which provided overland communication with the rear, was perhaps the only advantage of the position on Bolshaya Litsa. Otherwise, the abandoned Titov defensive line was more profitable. There

there were several, albeit unfinished, pillboxes. And there were no fortifications on the Western Face.

Quadruple machine gun of the Northern Fleet on a pedestal mount. To cover coastal facilities, such installations turned out to be ineffective and, if possible, were replaced by small-caliber automatic guns.

Having taken up the defense, the fighters hastily built on the front line only single trenches of an incomplete profile, most of them lined with stones.

The flanks of the division were covered by water barriers: in the north - by the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, in the south - by the channel of the Zapadnaya Litsa, which expanded to half a kilometer. The command of the division placed many hopes on these obstacles. Meanwhile, the bay near the Bolshaya Litsa trading post was crossed by sandbanks, along which it was not difficult to wade across during the low tides. The rangers took advantage of this. When, on the night of July 4, the defeated 95th regiment of the 14th SD, which was in dire need of rest and replenishment, was finally finally withdrawn to the rear, and the northern flank of the 52nd division was thus exposed, the enemy occupied the Bolshaya trading post without a fight. Faces. Having crossed the river, the battalion of the 137th German mountain regiment advanced along the southern coast of the bay and also captured the trading post. The Germans penetrated the rear of the division, but since it was not guarded at all by anyone, the headquarters did not receive any reports about this.

On the evening of July 4, the third battalion of the 205th regiment landed in Nerpichya Bay, transported here by sea from Murmansk. At the Bolshaya Litsa trading post, he unexpectedly ran into the huntsmen. It was not possible to break through to the columned path off the coast. Then the battalion turned aside and headed for its regiment through the hills and heaps of stones. The division headquarters finally received a report about the penetration of the Germans into the trading post, but considered that a random reconnaissance group had made it there. The German offensive began only two days later, but the headquarters had not been able by this time to check what was happening in its rear on the right flank.

On July 6, the Germans began artillery preparation. The shelling continued for about half an hour. Then German planes appeared, and attacks began by units of the 2nd mountain division. The 137th regiment of this division operated against the central sector of the division, striking at the joint between the 58th and 205th regiments. For two days on the right flank, the Germans tried to capture positions near the blown up bridge, but they did not even manage to cross the river.

The situation was worse on the left flank. There, 2 battalions of the 138th regiment of the 3rd mountain division on inflatable boats crossed Zapadnaya Litsa and occupied a bridgehead on the eastern coast.

The main blow of the huntsmen was inflicted on the site of the 2nd battalion of the 58th regiment, which covered the exit to the Mishukovskaya road and the heights located behind it. After shelling the positions of the battalion with mortars and mountain guns, the chasseurs, under cover of a smoke screen, crossed Zapadnaya Litsa in several places. Two companies of rangers attacked the 4th company of Lieutenant Puzikov, but were repulsed by concentrated fire and then driven back to their original positions. Then the rangers launched an offensive against the positions of the company already with the forces of the battalion, but they could not turn the tide of battle.

After that, the Germans tried to break through in the areas of other companies, but also had no success. Having not achieved success with frontal attacks, the huntsmen began to look for weaknesses and gaps in the defense of the units. In the end, the chasseurs bypassed the battalion, cutting it off from the regiment, and in some places leaked into its battle formations. As a result, a situation was created in which it was not always possible to understand where one's own and where

strangers.

Having surrounded the battalion, the rangers tried, leaving outposts around its positions, to develop the offensive further on the Mishukovskaya road. But the battalion, which completely retained controllability, launched counterattacks from the encirclement. The morale in the battalion was very high and corresponded to the views of its commander, Captain Soldatov, who told the soldiers:

"Please note that we are an inconvenient enemy for the enemy: we are in his rear. Jaegers are afraid of our stab in the back. And we must in every possible way increase this danger for them. We fight to the last bullet. Run out of ammo - we fight hand to hand.

Soldatov personally led several harassing counterattacks, executed tactically competently and without inflicting heavy losses. Only during the sixth counterattack, the rangers, who realized that the battalion would not allow them to develop the offensive, again transferred two companies against him and inflicted significant losses on the counterattacks. The 4th company suffered more than others, losing its commander, Lieutenant Puzikov, who was replaced by Lieutenant Marin.

After that, having called in aviation, the Germans tried to carry out another general attack on the positions of the battalion, but interrupted it at the very beginning, since the fire from the defensive positions and after the bombing turned out to be unexpectedly strong for the rangers. In fact, the position of the battalion was critical, there were few killed, but the number of wounded became threatening - mortar shelling and bombing affected, ammunition was running out.

But Soldatov's order not to save the last cartridges achieved its goal - the huntsmen, also exhausted by the attacks that they made throughout the day, did not dare to continue the general attack, deciding to avoid significant losses.

A fighter poses for a photograph against the backdrop of a typical northern landscape that has become the scene of fierce fighting.

In the evening, a corridor was broken through to the battalion by the forces of the regiment's reserve battalion, along which ammunition was delivered and some of the wounded were evacuated.

But in other areas, by evening, the rangers pushed the division's units to the north and, having bypassed them, nevertheless reached the heights near the Mishukovskaya road. A threat hung over the command post, the division headquarters and the firing positions of the southern artillery group. The 208th howitzer regiment covered the headquarters of the division.

Lacking infantry cover, the regiment commander, Major Yaroslavtsev, and the division commanders, captains Babichev and Sedyshev, sent fighters from headquarters and rear units to defend the firing positions. At first, the batteries fired at the enemy with guns. But the rangers, who broke through to the battalion, having assessed the situation, tried to overcome the shelled area with a throw and capture the positions of the batteries. When the enemy approached a critical distance, the howitzer crews, together with the rear services, fought back from the gun trenches and from behind the gun shields with small arms fire, and when there was a danger of throwing guns with grenades, they went on the counterattack.

The battle was fierce, along the entire line of the regiment's positions, hand-to-hand fights arose every now and then in the hollows and on the slopes of the mountains. The commanders of divisions and batteries had to fight alongside the Red Army.

The first blow inflicted by the Germans on the batteries was repulsed, but at a high cost. IN

the battery commander, senior lieutenant Shabelsky, head of

reconnaissance of one of the divisions, junior lieutenant Yakovlev, battery commanders lieutenants Zayats and Lebedev, political instructor Korobov, and three platoon commanders were wounded. It was not possible to find out the losses of ordinary fighters according to the surviving documents ...

Having failed to capture the batteries, the rangers regrouped and, with the support of aviation, began to try to cut the Mishukovskaya road. The third battery of the 54th anti-tank battalion covering it was located near the Mishukovskaya road. The platoon of junior lieutenant Kryzhanovsky, taking advantage of the fact that the huntsmen who had broken through did not have time to pull up mountain guns and mortars on packs, maneuvering along the highway, hit the enemy with direct fire.

The 314th anti-aircraft division found itself in a difficult position, finding itself in the zone of enemy machine-gun fire and at the same time repelling attacks from the air. Forced to repel the raid, being under fire from rangers, the division shot down two German aircraft. Having beaten off the air raid, the quadruple anti-aircraft machine-gun mounts and 37-mm cannons transferred their fire to the enemy infantry.

The huntsmen approached the road at a distance that allowed them to conduct effective fire on it. Horse-drawn carts carrying ammunition began to break down one after another. The amphibious tanks of the reconnaissance battalion of the division and lightly armored artillery tractors "Komsomolets" began to be used to transport ammunition.

On the evening of July 6, the second echelons of the regiments of the 52nd division were brought up to the bridgehead occupied by the Germans. On the morning of July 7, two battalions, supported by artillery fire, launched a counterattack and drove the 138th mountain regiment across the river. And at that moment the Germans struck a second blow from the rear, this time east of the bridge. The purpose of the strike was again an attempt to destroy the artillery. This area, bounded on the north by the valley of a nameless stream, housed the northern artillery group, the rear units of the 205th regiment, and a little further on the reserve 112th regiment. In the fog, the Germans could not choose the right direction of attack, being in a direction unfavorable for attacking artillery batteries, they were detected in a timely manner and came under rapid fire from direct fire. Jaegers rushed about. In one and a half to two hours, the enemy detachment was almost completely exterminated. It was not even necessary to bring into battle the rifle subunits sent to the rescue by the division commander.

The Germans managed to achieve relative success only in the areas of the 5th battery of the 158th art. regiment, command post of the 205th joint venture and again at the command post of the DIVISION.

At the 5th battery, the huntsmen were discovered too late. The battery managed to fire only one volley of buckshot before the rangers broke into the location. As on the day before, in the southern sector, the gunners again fired back with carbines from behind the shields of the guns and parapets and were also forced to go on the counterattack when the rangers tried to throw grenades at the guns.

However, the huntsmen, who had a numerical superiority, did not evade close combat and, in hand-to-hand combat, knocked out the artillerymen from the battery, capturing several wounded. The Komsomol organizer of the battery, gunner of the 4th gun, Sergeant Frolov, who led the counterattack, was killed.

The commander of the 5th battery, senior lieutenant Sherstnev, who was on his NP, when he was informed that the firing positions were captured by the enemy, ran with

observation post to the battlefield. On the way, he met riders who, under the command of deputy political instructor Shokhirev, had successfully repulsed the attack of a small group of rangers who had attacked them. With this small detachment, Sherstnev made his way to the firing positions. Artillerymen crushed the Germans and returned their

tools.

In battles, the Germans willingly used Soviet automatic weapons.

The personnel of the command post of the 205th Infantry Regiment withstood the difficult battle. Here the battle was led by the battalion commissar Ivannikov, who temporarily commanded the regiment. This political worker showed outstanding organizational skills in organizing the battle. He competently arranged the available people, set feasible tasks for them, concentrating the available firepower in advantageous places. The enemy obviously did not expect such a competent and effective rebuff from the regimental command post. The Germans, seeing that the general course of the battle was not in their favor, made every effort to capture an advantageous position and gain a foothold on it until reinforcements arrived.

The huntsmen attacked several times, but were repulsed with heavy damage. They made the last attack, having already surrounded the CP from all sides. But as a result of a well-organized defense, this time they also suffered such significant losses that Ivannikov was able to throw the enemy away from the command post with a counterattack.

The rangers, however, even after the counterattack were not going to give up trying to break through on the regiment's sector and began to regroup. This time they began to strike the main blow around the right flank of the regiment, trying to reach the Mishukovskaya road from the east.

Ivannikov transferred his NP to the 3rd battalion, which covered this direction, transferring here machine guns that had previously defended the regiment's command post, and placing them at the junctions of the companies. The companies of the battalion also housed all the spotters available in the regiment from the supporting batteries. In the area of the command post of the regiment, which blocked the exit to the rear of the regiment, fighters of all rear services were concentrated - riders, cooks, musicians and car drivers, who again took up all-round defense and

divided into two consolidated detachments under the command of lieutenants Demin and Slepuschenko.

Considering the importance of the covered direction and not really relying on the division commander of the 112th joint venture, who was in the reserve, Ivannikov created his own regimental reserve, using cadets of the regimental school under the command of Lieutenant Fedorov for this.

The battle that began after the regrouping of the rangers was terrible. For 4 hours, the huntsmen continuously attacked, not rolling back, imposing a fight for destruction on the battalion. Ivannikov was constantly in the battle formations of the battalion,

saying:

"We carry out one order, we have one goal, one honor, and one death. I won't go a single step without a command, and I forbid you.

In such a situation, of course, there was no need to wait for an order to withdraw. On the contrary, the commander of the 52nd division, Major General Nikishin, at that time had a Bodo conversation with Lieutenant General Frolov, in which the following was said about this:

"F.: You can't retreat, you have to fight to the last. This is the order of the party and the government."

N: Everything in our power will be done.

In the midst of the battle, the secretary of the party bureau of the regiment, battalion commissar Sharkov, also arrived in the battalion, otherwise the battalion could only rely on the measures that Ivannikov managed to take in a timely manner. The rangers did not have enough strength to overturn the battalion with blows to the forehead. Attempts to dismember the battle formations of the battalion and to wring out thinned companies from each other did not bring success either.

Therefore, the hunters again decided to repeat the encirclement attempt. And again, as in the defense of the regimental command post, Ivannikov, having caught the critical moment of the battle, threw all possible forces into the counterattack. Everyone attacked. Ivannikov himself led the strike of fresh forces, consisting of rear groups and a regimental school. The commander of the 3rd battalion, Tikhomirov, and the battalion commissar, Sharkov, marched in battle formations of companies that supported the attack of three reserve detachments.

The hunters did not run and put up fierce resistance. But the moment for the attack was chosen correctly - the stretched battle formations of the rangers no longer had sufficient stability. During the attack, Sharkov, who had been awarded the Order of Lenin during the Finnish war, was in the right-flank company, which attacked in a semi-encirclement and came under heavy crossfire. Before the blows of the rear groups of Ivannikov and the remaining two companies of the 3rd battalion on the flanks of the rangers forced them to begin a withdrawal, the company suffered heavy losses, and Sharkov was among the dead. A little later, during the attack, Tikhomirov also died, and Ivannikov actually took command of the battalion during the battle. The rangers, thrown back by the second counterattack, abandoned further attempts to break through in this sector. As it became known later from the prisoners, up to two battalions of the 138th Mountain Guard Regiment participated in attacks on units of the 205th Rifle Regiment, which in practice meant more than 4-fold superiority of the enemy in manpower, since the battalions of rangers at that time were twice as numerous outnumbered the bloodless battalions of the 205th regiment.

Many weapons and corpses of enemy soldiers were found on the battlefield. Most of the dead were in the valley of a nameless stream.

Preparing for the first landing

(July 4-6)

In connection with the beginning of the German offensive on Zapadnaya Litsa, the AF of the Federation Council urgently sought opportunities to influence the situation. The same was persistently demanded by the central leadership, concerned about the possibility of the Germans capturing the Northern Fleet Base in Polyarny and the strategically important ice-free port of Murmansk.

At this time, a rather curious encrypted order signed by Voroshilov and Zhdanov came to the Northern Fleet: to disguise torpedo boats as fishing vessels and hunt them for enemy ships.

To the credit of the command of the Northern Fleet, it should be noted that he had the will not to accept this adventurous order for execution, reporting that the Germans were already sinking enough civilian ships (obviously, after such orders) and that the planned event would therefore be ineffective.

The Armed Forces of the Northern Fleet considered the landing of assault forces from the sea behind enemy lines to assist units of the 14th Army and, especially, the 52nd Division, which was being pressed by the Germans on Zapadnaya Litsa, as a real measure to correct the situation that had arisen.

The coast of the Titovka Bay seemed the most promising for landing to the headquarters of the fleet. It juts out into the mainland for a long distance, comes close to the front roads, and in some places there are moorings. In addition, the valley of the Titovka River seemed to be a convenient place for building up forces and launching an offensive.

The Military Council of the Fleet came to the conclusion that under the prevailing conditions, the small ships of the OVR could carry out the transportation of the landing and land it on the shore better than others. However, this bold and, at first glance, logical idea had two serious "buts". Firstly, the Titovka Bay is located about 20 kilometers from the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, which required quite long independent actions from the landing party until it was connected with the forces of the 14th Army. Consequently, according to preliminary calculations, it was necessary to land at least two regiments, which the fleet did not have.

Secondly, for the success of the planned operation, the troops on the front in the area of Zapadnaya Litsa had to go on the offensive simultaneously with the landing, to which the command of the Northern Fleet did not yet have the consent of the command of the 14th Army. However, the plan was drawn up, and the head of the operational department of the fleet headquarters, Captain 1st Rank Rumyantsev, took him to Murmansk to present him to the command of the 14th Army. As the alleged commander of the landing, Captain 1st Rank Platonov was sent along with him.

The chief of staff of the army, Colonel Skvirsky, after carefully reading the proposals, declared that he was not vested with the power to make a final decision, but, knowing the situation at the front, he was sure that the whole undertaking was unrealistic.

"To put this plan into action," he said, "neither you nor we have sufficient forces. Apparently, your plan will have to be considered an interesting academic development.

However, he did not dare to make any decision on his own and reported on the proposal to the commander of the 14th Army, Lieutenant General Frolov. The army commander disagreed even more with the naval staff officers in assessing the forces needed for the operation than his chief of staff.

"To carry out such a deep detour," he explained, "it is necessary to get at least two more fresh divisions, one for landing, the other for breaking through the front. There is no way to take them now. Not a single person can be filmed from the Kandalaksha direction. The situation there is no less difficult than here. This means that we, my friends sailors, do not need to advance, but to strengthen and defend our positions. Better think about how to help the army drive the Germans from our bank across the river. The 52nd division is well fortified, it will fight to the death, but it is difficult for it alone to hold back the onslaught of a whole fascist corps, and even with their overwhelming air superiority.

The fact that the "fascist corps" is only two battered divisions that have neither armored vehicles nor heavy and medium artillery, the general did not specify. "Sailors fight like lions on land," he continued, "I don't think I have seen such fearlessness and contempt for death either in the World War, or in the Civil War, or in Spain. Without naval volunteers, we would probably not have survived here. But now it is necessary at all costs to liquidate the dangerous foothold on the right bank of the Western Litsa. Tell the commander of the fleet that we will only welcome any of your help in this matter.

Rumyantsev and Potapov reported on the results of the trip to the headquarters of the 14th Army to the commander of the fleet.

But Rear Admiral Golovko decided not to abandon the idea of landing.

"The Germans occupied the Bolshaya Litsa collective farm," he said. "Looks like they're aiming to bypass us from the north, from the sea. What kind of fleet will we be if we let them do it so easily? What are we sailors after that? Now we need to land troops no longer in the rear of the enemy, but, as far as I understand, in the flank. The commander of the fleet at the time of this conversation was seriously ill. He had a high temperature, and Rumyantsev and Potapov proposed to discuss the issue later, but the commander, apparently having long considered various options for the development of the situation, had already begun to outline his plan for the operation.

He believed that taking Titovka from the Nazis and freeing the valley of the Western Litsa River was a tempting idea, but what to do if there were not enough forces for an operational landing. This means that it is necessary to disturb the enemy more often, to land small tactical groups, even without the hope of linking up with the main forces of the front. It is always possible to remove the landed paratroopers from the shore to the ships, if they do not hold out on land. The main thing is that the enemy must look back, be afraid of the sea.

"Look for people in the landing," ordered Golovko. "Look who can be taken in the training detachment, on the ships being repaired. Prepare an order for the formation of a battalion of marines.

In the early morning of July 5, Kaperang Platonov was summoned to the FKP by the chief of staff of the fleet, Rear Admiral Kucherov.

"The Military Council instructed me," Kucherov began, "to set you the task of landing a tactical assault. According to intelligence, the enemy in our theater has the following forces. Naval Group "North" with headquarters in

Tromso consists of the first and second guard formations, including five destroyers, three Norwegian Steg-class destroyers, twelve patrol ships, thirteen minesweepers, two minelayers, six submarines and ten patrol boats. Up to four hundred aircraft of various types are concentrated at the airfields of Northern Norway and Finland, on the land front ...

Prepare and carry out the operation as soon as possible, transport and disembark troops to carry out the ships of the OVR. You are appointed commander of the landing," the Rear Admiral summed up. - Destroyers are allocated from the sea to cover the landing detachment, aviation support - by the method of duty at the airfield. Report the decision to the Military Council of the Fleet orally, as soon as you are ready.

The small hunter became the main "workhorse" of landing operations in the north and was indispensable for patrolling under the dominance of enemy aircraft.

One day remained at the disposal of the OVR headquarters, and it was necessary to select ships for the role of transports and landing craft, appoint guards, assign infantry to ships, train them in the first case to at least quickly get out of the holds and run down the gangplank, find profitable warrants and transition courses, choose the time of landing and the place of approach to the shore ... and solve dozens of other similar issues. There were no fresh units for the landing. Through the joint efforts of the 14th Army and the Northern Fleet, the battalion of the 95th Rifle Regiment, which was stationed in

in the reserve of the 14th army. The reserve and machine-gun companies of the 102nd Rifle Regiment were used for resupplying. Also, a sapper company was included in the landing force.

During a hasty retreat from Titovka, the prisoners, who were doing earthwork there on the construction of the airfield, got together with the drivers on part of the machines used on the construction of the airfield, to the Bolshaya Litsa trading post. The sappers, after the landing of Bolshaya Litsa, were supposed to try to bring the cars to Nerpichy Bay, clearing the way for them.

The 52nd Infantry Division held back the onslaught of the Germans, who occupied the trading post of Big Face. It covered the positions of the enemy from two sides. The landing from the sea was supposed to envelop from a third side, capturing the Bolshaya Litsa trading post, and

perhaps the elimination of the entire group of Nazis who managed to force the river.

Captain 2nd rank Shmelev was appointed head of the landing headquarters. The Northern Fleet did not yet have experience in landing combat assault forces.

At the pre-war autumn maneuvers of the Northern Fleet, ways were sought to land people, horses, and deliver weapons. Landing, as a rule, was carried out from destroyers - ship's boats or from transports - fishing rowboats. But this takes a long time and puts the ships with landing troops at risk of being hit by German aircraft.

The fleet had only fishing trawlers, motorboats and boats of the Moscow Region as landing craft. No one had ever used them as landing craft in combat before. The command of the Northern Fleet was to test them as landing craft without prior preparation, right in battle. Unlike the command of the Black Sea Fleet, which later found itself in the same situation, the Severomors had an excellent idea of the degree of risk and knew that the slightest miscalculation could cost not only heavy casualties, but also threaten the failure of the entire operation. It was necessary to find a solution in which the task would be completed, despite technical difficulties and opposition from the enemy. It was decided to use motorized boats as the main landing means. They were entrusted with the landing of the first amphibious assault and the transportation of fighters from minesweepers to the shore.

Before loading troops.

In case the motorboats were unsuitable for disembarking people directly on the shore due to heavy draft, another option was provided: to use them as moorings. Then already, mooring to them, the boats of the Ministry of Defense would have transferred a battalion intended for landing to the shore. Artillery support for the landing was assigned to the Groza patrol ship and minesweepers converted from trawlers.

The enemy's aviation posed the main danger, but here the notorious German pedantry suggested effective tactics against aviation. The Germans started flying every day, as a rule, at exactly 8 am and stopped at 8 pm. The landing headquarters calculated the time so that the landing of the infantry, the passage by sea, the landing of the landing force and the curtailment of forces fit into the "non-flying" "night" time in the conditions of the polar day.

Large surface ships of the enemy did not threaten the landing: then in the North they

was not there yet. Submarines were also not very dangerous for small landing craft, and the detachment was fully provided with security forces. Although the landing headquarters expected opposition from the shore, it was not afraid, since the firing of field guns at a sea target is ineffective, while it is not at all difficult for naval artillery to suppress army batteries due to the use of rangefinder devices designed to solve even more complex tasks. Serious difficulties in the implementation of the planned enterprise arose due to the different running capabilities of the ships. MO boats could develop a speed of 24 knots, minesweepers - 6-8 knots, depending on the quality of coal, motor boats 4-5 knots in good weather, and even less in wind and rough seas. The command was afraid to release ships in independent groups because of the uneven level of training of the teams and the difficulties with security.

As a result, it was decided to minesweepers to drive motorized boats in tows, and to follow the guards at their own speed.

The Motovsky Bay deeply protrudes into the land and is all cut up by lips bearing Finnish and Russian names: Ura, Ara, Vichany, Titovka, Kutovaya, Ozerko, Motka, Eina. These are vast, deep-water bays sheltered from the winds, suitable for anchorages of entire squadrons. And the lip Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa is divided in turn into smaller lips: Andreeva, Nerpichya, Lopatkina - Bolshaya and Malaya. On this occasion, army officers joked: "Sailors have a lot of lips, but there is no one to kiss."

The most advantageous landing site, as close as possible to the mouth of the Western Litsa River, was the deep sandy shore in Nerpichya Bay. This is where the navigators set the course.

The paratroopers were put on ships in Murmansk. In order to maintain secrecy and achieve surprise maneuvers, the berths were strictly guarded. The fighters were told that they were being transported to a new location. They learned about the upcoming task only after the ships had left the moorings.

disembarkation

(July 6)

The ships of the landing detachment went to sea on the night of July 6. Three former trawlers followed each other in a wake column, each dragging a motorboat behind him. The escort was followed by the Groza patrol ship and three MO boats. They kept in an anti-submarine order, fanning out ahead of the guarded ships. The sky was clear. The dim polar sun was low on the horizon. Thick black smoke from the ship's chimneys unmasked the warrant for miles. On the right and left along the shores of the Motovsky Gulf, granite cliffs protruding far into the sea rose - numerous capes, among which Cape Pikshuev posed the greatest danger to the landing force. He leaned out into the very middle of the bay, and if the huntsmen guessed to set up an observation post at its tip, then the entire landing party was at their fingertips. Therefore, the ships of the detachment pressed as close as possible to the southern side of the coast, followed its bends, but in the effectiveness of this measure

the command of the landing was hardly believed. The arrival of the landing party still could not be hidden, it was only important that the Germans discovered it as late as possible.

On the beam of Cape Vyev-Navolok, the end motorboat signaled for permission to slow down, as its mast was torn off by a tugboat. Shmelev ordered to answer

to the commander of the motorboat that the speed of the detachment will remain the same. It was impossible to make the success of the landing dependent on the condition of one small vehicle.

Landing of troops from a motorboat.

The command of the detachment, with some delay, began to understand that there would most likely be little use from the motorized boats, which were also assigned for the first throw. In the event of the appearance of German aviation, such a clumsy landing detachment, covered by the aviation of the fleet "by the method of airfield duty", was doomed to certain death, but I did not want to think about it.

At the lighthouse on Cape Pikshuev, the ships turned into Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay. The Germans have already occupied one of its banks. The guns of the ships, ready to immediately open fire, were deployed towards the shore. Narrownesses, in violation of the immutable laws of peacetime, the ships passed without slowing down. In the Nerpichya Bay, motorboats, having given up the towing lines, rushed to the shore. Clutching their machine guns to their chests, the paratroopers jumped from high sides onto the sand, fell, got up and, crouching, ran towards the bushes. From the side of the river, distant automatic and machine-gun bursts, mine explosions were occasionally heard. Artillery roared far away in the mountains. Although no one seriously interfered with the landing, in order to invigorate the paratroopers, the captain Platonov ordered the Thunderstorm gunboat to open fire from the main caliber guns at the targets that were detected.

During the landing, all the worst fears about the unsuitability of motorized boats for the role of landing craft were justified. One of them buried its nose in the sand and could not get out of the shallows, the other wind pressed its side to the shore, so that its propeller worked in "fan mode". The motorboats took a long time to turn around and very slowly approached the minesweepers behind the marines. There was a real threat that the planned landing dates would not be met. I had to put MO boats into action. They immediately flashed across the bay, showing a striking contrast with the slow actions of clumsy motorized boats. Strong motors and three propellers allowed them to masterfully maneuver, easily hold the bow

on a sandbank, and when necessary, instantly break away from it. Due to high speeds and excellent maneuverability, the boats turned between the shore and the ships with landing troops three times faster than motorized boats.

If the enemy discovered the landing at any stage before it was completed, the consequences would be disastrous. Platonov and Shmelev, however, even at that moment did not seem to fully realize what a disastrous adventure they had gotten into and to what extent, in fact, they were lucky.

The landing was coming to an end when a Finnish reconnaissance aircraft appeared in the sky. The commander of the Thunderstorm, Senior Lieutenant Kalmykov, asked permission to drive him away with anti-aircraft fire. Kaperang Platonov, without thinking, gave permission to open fire. Behind the flagship, everyone else opened fire. At the signal observation post in Vichany Bay, having heard the cannonade and the noise of engines, they decided that the landing detachment was being bombed by enemy aircraft, and reported their assumptions to the fleet headquarters in Polyarny.

By order of the headquarters, a flight of I-16 fighters flew in, but the reconnaissance aircraft had already managed to escape, and the bombers had not yet appeared.

The ships returned to the main base one by one. They were released from the scene immediately after the troops landed. It was considered dangerous to collect all the ships and line them up in a warrant, which means detaining them in the landing area.

When enemy aircraft appeared, the ships were still expected to be immediately destroyed, with the only difference being that after the landing, of course, there would be much fewer victims.

In general, the whole operation was saved only by the fact that the Germans completely overlooked it.

But on the other hand, this greatly helped the actions of the landing itself. For the Germans, it was about as unexpected as their own treacherous attack on 22 June. The scale of this surprise, however, was, alas, different, but Dietl's corps had more than enough of it.

The landing party came into contact with the enemy only at the Bolshaya Litsa colony occupied by the Germans on July 4. Until now, there was no exact information about the presence of the Germans here. The headquarters of the 52nd division was inclined to consider the collision with the rangers of the battalion of the 205th regiment as an accidental contact with enemy scouts.

Having a significant numerical superiority, the paratroopers drove the Germans from the outskirts of the trading post. It was difficult to attack further, since the huntsmen who managed to recover from the unexpected attack took good positions in the houses and did not let the paratroopers close to them to throw a grenade with machine-gun fire. Fighters caught on the edge of the village, looking for vulnerabilities in enemy positions, found an ammunition depot in one of the sheds.

The sappers offered to take over the colony "in a sapper way." The warehouse was blown up. The glow and roar of the explosion, combined with the chaotic shooting opened from the sea, confused the rangers. Fearing to be surrounded, they hurriedly left the village. The sappers started laying a columned path to the Nerpicha Bay. They had to work under fire, which the retired rangers fired from machine guns and mortars. Things progressed slowly, though. Over the next 24 hours, the road was completed, and the cars were taken out of the trading post.

And even after that the headquarters of the 52nd division still did not know that the enemy was in the rear on the right flank. Head of the road department of the army,

having received a report from the sappers, he did not report to the division about the clashes in the trading post.

The actions of the paratroopers, supported on the morning of July 7 by the strike of two battalions of the second echelons of the regiments of the 52nd division, caused a commotion at the headquarters of the German 3rd mountain division of the Germans. Fearing for the fate of the 138th mountain regiment, which was retreating under the blows of Soviet units, the corps commander Dietl not only allowed him to be taken to the western coast, but also sent two battalions there to support him.

Not understanding the essence of what was happening, the huntsmen became nervous.

Unlike the headquarters of the 52nd division, which kept absolute calm about the appearance of the Germans in the rear of their northern flank, the Germans immediately began to imagine various dirty options for the development of the Russian offensive. Worried about the departure of their neighbor, the headquarters of the 137th regiment began to see an offensive from the bridge area to the north. On both banks of the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa bay, the regiment's reports revealed movements of four reinforced Soviet battalions.

The Germans halted their offensive and began to regroup, trying to take the most advantageous positions to repel a possible Russian offensive.

On the whole, the corps remained in its previous positions, but since, in order to repel possible attacks, the Germans gave them a compact location, concentrating available firepower, a gap of 6 kilometers was formed between the divisions of the corps.

The German offensive slowed down, and for two days the rangers moved continuously from place to place, trying to bring their positions to logical perfection.

Second landing

(July 6-12)

When the ships of the landing group left Nerpichy Bay one by one, the tide began to ebb. The water level near the shore dropped noticeably, and the motorboat, which ran aground, was completely on land. I had to disarm it and shoot it with guns so that the Germans could not use it. Thus, an account was opened for the shipborne losses of the landing detachment.

The chief of staff of the fleet was afraid that the enemy would organize the crossing of troops to the rear of the landing force. To prevent this, he ordered to set up a ship's watch in the bay of Zapadnaya Litsa. German aviation, which in those days reigned supreme in the air, did not miss a single target, and everyone generally understood how such a watch would most likely end.

But the order, of course, was not discussed, and the outdated minesweeper "T-890" of the "Iskra" class, built back in 1912 and already renamed twice - first in 1923 from "Patron" to "Burbot", and then in 1939 in the "T-890". The veteran ship, which sailed in the Barents Sea in 1933, had an experienced crew staffed with regular sailors, who had not yet been touched by the thoughtless formation of the marines that was destroying fleet personnel, and, like MO-121, was well prepared for

combat operations. However, it was completely unsuitable for combat with enemy aircraft, as it was poorly maneuverable and at the same time had a relatively large size.

Platonov's next mistake this time led to tragic consequences. Luck is over.

At 8 am, when the ships of the landing detachment were already entering the Kola Bay, the punctual German pilots took to the air right on schedule. Before the detachment had time to moor, the captain Platonov had already received a report that the T-890 minesweeper was being bombed by three units of Yu-88.

These are the bombs used by the Li-88 to bombard Soviet ships. The report transmitted when the German planes approached turned out to be not entirely accurate, and this played a fatal role in the fate of the ship. In fact, he was attacked by two Junkers triples, covered by a pair of B-109 Messerschmitts. The crew of the minesweeper did not just consist of old-timers, most of them on it also participated in hostilities during the Finnish war. The commander of the minesweeper, Senior Lieutenant Ivshin, skillfully maneuvered even such a clumsy vessel. The ship skillfully dodged bombs, beat off attacks from two guns and two heavy machine guns as best she could, damaged two Junkers, and even managed not to get a single direct hit. However

close explosions of bombs did their job. The ship received many holes. The machine of pre-revolutionary construction, which withstood fragments and shaking from ruptures, continued to work, but the seams of the hull skin parted from hydraulic shocks. The ship took a lot of water, and after the final loss of maneuverability, the Germans finally managed to successfully bombard the stern. The minesweeper, which had lost its course, was washed ashore by the tidal current, and the team managed to put it aground. Aground, the ship gained some stability. The link of fighters called by Platonov to drive off the Junkers was itself driven off by a pair of Messerschmitts, losing one car.

Half of the crew died in action, but the crew did not leave the minesweeper. And the Germans, accustomed to bringing things to the end, again repeated the raids. This went on for many hours. The battle subsided with the departure of the planes and flared up again with their next return. Our fighters more than once appeared over the Western Lyceum, but the Messerschmitts immediately engaged in an air battle with them.

Only at 17.30, when the sunken ship fell on its side and it became impossible to shoot back, the surviving sailors, taking the wounded, crossed to the shore.

After the aces of the Luftwaffe went to sleep on schedule, two MoD boats were sent from Polyarny to the T-890 to take people, bury the dead and remove weapons from the wrecked ship. Of all 42 people on the team, only a few people survived, among them the commander of the ship, Senior Lieutenant Ivshin, with a crushed right hand and a seriously wounded navigator.

After that, the commander of the OVRA, the captain Platonov, who had a distinct feature of detecting mistakes in his actions only after they were committed, no longer assigned minesweepers to patrol, but used for these purposes three-engine sea hunters, who had phenomenal maneuverability, who were now on duty in places where, in case of danger could come close to the cliffs hanging over the shore. In such cases, not being able to descend sufficiently, the Germans usually could not get into a perfectly maneuvering small ship.

The landing party no longer needed support from the sea - having knocked out the Germans from Bolshaya Litsa, he connected with units of the 52nd division. The Germans stopped their offensive for a couple of days.

But the commander of the 52nd division, Major General Nikishin, who was trying to push the Germans across the river, asked the fleet command to drive the Germans away from the mouth of the Zapadnaya Litsa River with naval artillery fire.

Rear Admiral Golovko ordered the head of the OVR, Platonov, to take urgent measures.

On the same night, three boats of the Ministry of Defense entered Zapadnaya Litsa under the braid pennant of the division commander, captain 3rd rank Valchuk. Valchuk was faced with the task of taking advantage of full water, entering, as far as the draft of ships would allow, at the mouth of the river, looking around there, identifying enemy targets - crossings, firing points, as well as concentrations of troops - and destroy them.

But the Germans, who feared a serious offensive from the 52nd division, which had begun to show activity, and were wary of the landing, were regrouping at that moment, and the positions they occupied, shifted by 6 kilometers, no longer corresponded to those plotted on the map before the landing. And whether the situation could have changed in two days, Platonov did not think, believing that it would not be difficult to find the positions plotted on the map, and called

the task entrusted to Valchuk, "an easy hike."

Arriving at the appointed place, the division commander could not visually determine anything, of course, and the boats, without firing a single shot, returned to the base.

A small hunter goes on a combat mission.

But in the Soviet Navy it is better to shoot nowhere than not to shoot anywhere. The commanders of the boats offered Valchuk to "shoot", as Platonov had already done during the landing. But Valchuk did not "raise the morale" of the 52nd division by fictitious shelling of undetected positions, for which he paid the price. Upon arrival at the base, the prosecutor of the fleet, Mukhomorov, immediately prepared to initiate a case against him, but then Platonov finally showed objectivity and told the prosecutor of the fleet, who turned to him for an official assessment of Valchuk's behavior, that "Valchuk turned out to be a lack of initiative, unable to command such active combat weapons as high-speed MO boat, but there was no cowardice in his actions. What was in his own actions and the actions of his headquarters, the head of the OVR, to clarify, of course,

did not.

The huntsmen did not begin to strengthen the coast of the Motovsky Bay they had captured, intending to continue the offensive. This made it possible to continue to land tactical landings and sabotage units in the rear of the Germans. A battalion of border guards had long been in Ura Guba, who knew the area well and possessed the skills necessary for paratroopers. They decided to land them on the western coast of the Zapadnaya Litsa Bay in order to divert enemy forces from the 52nd Infantry Division, which was preparing for the offensive.

The task of landing a second landing was set before the command of the OVRA already as a matter of course. Kaperang Platonov and OVR commissar Novozhilov were summoned by the commander of the fleet and said that Lieutenant General Frolov was asking to send a battalion of border guards to the rear of the enemy. We need to land them in Zapadnaya Litsa and be ready to take them back if the Germans push the paratroopers back to the shore. The border guards were given the task - to cross the river and, after a short raid behind enemy lines, to connect with units of the 52nd division. On the night of July 8, when the sun in the Arctic was shining almost like daylight, a detachment of landing craft received border guards on ships at the mouth of the Uritsa River. Loading went almost like a drill. From the first landing, Platonov drew certain conclusions, and instead of motorboats, well-proven MO boats were now used as landing craft. In the role of transports, minesweepers and patrol ships were left. Moreover, if last time people were loaded onto motorboats towed behind minesweepers, now Platonov compensated for their absence by putting twice as many people on ships.

They also abandoned the Thunderstorm as a flagship. Although he had the technical means to control a detachment of ships and good artillery to support the landing, he was a relatively large ship, and therefore noticeable. The commander of OVROM, who again led the landing party, believed that the second landing might not go as smoothly as the first. As Platonov himself later stated, "on a narrow landing front, where everything happens in a matter of minutes and in full view of the commander, it was more convenient to control the battle with the then technical means of communication not by radio, but from a speedboat, giving voice commands."

Artillery support for the landing was assigned to the minesweepers and boats of the Ministry of Defense. It was decided that it was better for ships to go to the landing site in a dispersed order - it was easier to defend themselves from aircraft and evade submarines. Based

For these reasons, the detachment was composed of two minesweepers and three boats of the Ministry of Defense, although it transported the same battalion in size as the first time.

The paratroopers land on the shore.

Within an hour without a single shot, the detachment safely landed the border guards and lay down on the return course. This time, Platonov no longer left the ship patrol, and every night he sent two motorized boats to the landing site to communicate with the landing force. They delivered ammunition and food, took away the wounded, trophies, prisoners of war and received information about the evolving situation.

Colonel Sinilov, head of the border troops of the Murmansk district, went with the paratroopers. However, the detachment failed to penetrate the German rear. An attempt to cross the Bolshaya Litsa River ended in failure. The battalion was thrown back by machine-gun and mortar fire from the rangers. Changing place and moving south, Sinilov made another attempt to cross the river, already with fire support from the artillery of the 52nd division. But the chasseurs occupied the western bank quite tightly along the entire length of the right flank of the division and again thwarted an attempt to cross.

The frontier raid on the rear of the enemy was unsuccessful and ended on the fourth day. The detachment twice tried to cross the Zapadnaya Litsa River and retreated to the landing site. The operation to remove the landing was led by the chief of staff of the OVR, captain of the 3rd rank Meshcheryakov. Under the cover of naval artillery, the boats of the Ministry of Defense took the paratroopers on board and, taking advantage of the calm of the night in the air, delivered them to Ura-Guba.

Nikishin's counteroffensive

(Night of July 9th)

Major General Nikishin also decided not to move the command post of the division further to the rear, fearing the loss of control of the division and the fact that the Germans would be able to encircle the regiments as a result. By order of Nikishin, the division headquarters and the political department took up all-round defense, and the motorized rifle company of the reconnaissance battalion, or rather, two of its platoons, which were available, was pulled up to the division headquarters. A little later, immediately after returning from behind the front line, where he was on a reconnaissance search, the third platoon, Lieutenant Malyshev, was also brought up to the command post.

The commander of the reconnaissance battalion, Major Khudalov, assumed command of the company, given that the Germans approached the command post of the division by 150 meters, without having time to pull up mortars, and have the 7th company of the 58th regiment on their flank, occupying a stable position on a rocky ridge, Khudalov decided to throw back the rangers with a counterattack. The entire composition of the reconnaissance company had machine guns, which at a short distance gave him an advantage over the rangers, armed mainly with carbines.

Having ordered the fighters to leave everything in the KP area except machine guns, spare discs and grenades, Khudalov deployed the company in a chain, deliberately standing in the center so that all the fighters could see him. The right-flank platoon was led by Senior Lieutenant Galchuk, the left-flank platoon by Lieutenant Malyshev.

The attack was launched on the whistle, without a single shot being fired. Forewarned and physically well prepared scouts rushed to the positions of the rangers at a run, without bending down and without stopping, with all the speed at which

were just capable.

The attack from a short distance was a complete surprise for the Germans. Before the huntsmen had time to react to the attack and concentrate fire on the attacking chain, the scouts covered half the distance separating them from the enemy, after which they quickly lay down and opened heavy fire from machine guns at the positions of the huntsmen, under the cover of which they continued to approach the enemy with short throws. The rangers could not withstand the heavy fire of light machine guns and machine guns and began to hastily retreat from a small pass, from which they fired at the command post of the division.

At the same time, they had to abandon the machine guns. Withdrawing to a reserve position, which the rangers always had behind them in such a case, they were able to pin the scouts to the ground with the fire of the platoon covering them.

But the pass was captured and the direct threat to the command post of the division was eliminated. The scouts hastily entrenched themselves on the pass, after which Khudalov tried to establish contact with the 7th company, which now turned out to be his neighbor. However, from the ridge on which she was, for some reason, they were shooting in an easterly direction. Deciding that the neighbors missed the attack of the reconnaissance company and the retreat of the rangers, Khudalov went to the ridge, accompanied by Malyshev and several fighters, and already from a distance began to explain to the 7th company that they were firing at their own.

This saved him. A no less flamboyant German expression sounded from the crest, after which the Major's group was machine-gunned with tracer bullets.

Hiding behind boulders, the scouts returned to the pass, after which Khudalov handed over command of the company to Galchuk, and he himself went to the rear of the divisional positions to find out where the 7th company had fallen back.

He managed to do this by finding the chief of staff of the 58th regiment, Captain Saltykov. It turned out that the 7th company had already managed to withdraw two kilometers and entrenched itself behind the command post of the division.

From the prisoners it became known that on the afternoon of July 6, a reinforced battalion of the 138th mountain regiment was concentrated at height 258.3. His attack on the northern artillery group was supposed to contribute to the success of the main forces of the same regiment, advancing in the bridge area.

The rifle companies of the reconnaissance battalions were armed with machine guns.

By evening, the situation on the flanks of the division had stabilized:

The 2nd battalion of the 58th SP and the 3rd battalion of the 205th successfully avoided encirclement, while the northern and southern artillery groups repelled the onslaught of rangers on their positions. Given this, Nikishin considered it possible to go on the counteroffensive by the end of the day.

The strike was planned to be delivered by the forces of the 112th regiment, which was in the second echelon, with the support of part of the battalions of the 58th and 205th regiments. Time for the preparation of the strike was given no more than three hours. The searches for scouts carried out before the start of the counteroffensive showed that the main enemy forces were still concentrated at the junction of the 205th and 58th regiments, while both flanks of the 205th regiment remained captured by the Germans. In general, the enemy was noticeably exhausted by the evening, and the battles went on only with small groups of rangers. Army headquarters, planning a counterattack for the next day, finally agreed to Nikishin's proposal to launch the offensive immediately.

Tankers are preparing to attack.

In this case, a quick transition to the offensive was justified - it was planned to strike the main blow with fresh forces, against the enemy, who had not yet had time to regroup after unsuccessful attacks. The positions of the rangers, after attempts to envelop and break through to the rear, which continued all day, turned out to be too stretched and clearly not suitable for repelling a counterattack. In addition, in the excitement of the offensive battle that lasted all day, the rangers had not yet realized that their new positions were on the ground, allowing the use of tanks.

The fact that the huntsmen were clearly carried away by the offensive was also evidenced by the lack of a proper number of firing points suitable for defense. In the strike area of the 112th regiment, the Germans had only one large-caliber machine gun located in an advantageous and well-fortified position. To suppress it, an armored car was brought to direct fire, commanded by Sergeant Kulikov, the future Minister of Ferrous Metallurgy of the Ukrainian SSR. With three shells, Kulikov managed to suppress the machine gun, after which an attack began on a company of floating tanks of the reconnaissance battalion, behind which all 3 battalions of the 112th regiment, supported by fire from both artillery regiments of the division, struck.

Despite the sudden blow of superior enemy forces supported by tanks, the rangers did not lose their heads at all and quickly and in an organized manner concentrated on heights, near boulder clusters and in other places convenient for defense, mainly beyond the reach of tanks. But they were not supported by artillery in time. With their own fire, the huntsmen could not press the attackers to the ground. When two pack batteries and mortars finally opened fire, the battalions of the 112th Regiment had already met the enemy at short distances. The abundance of boulders prevented the effective use of grenades. Every now and then hand-to-hand fights broke out behind the shelters. The stability of the rangers of the reinforced battalion of the 138th regiment, which resisted the onslaught of the 112th SP, in the defense turned out to be simply phenomenal - and at that moment they only retreated somewhat in some areas, retaining the line of battle formations. The battle took on a protracted character. But Nikishin, who managed to evaluate the combat experience of the rangers in three days of fighting, foresaw such a possibility. By his order, at about 2 am, the battalions of the 205th and 58th regiments launched a counterattack, since the Germans now weakened their positions at the junction of the regiments.

The fighters of one of the distinguished units.

For the first time during the fighting on the Litsa bridgehead, the rangers had to turn the front. They could not do it right in such a difficult situation. Gaps appeared in their battle formations in the direction of both strikes, into which groups of Soviet soldiers began to penetrate. The Jaegers resisted stubbornly for another three hours, but their situation was now steadily deteriorating. With blows from both sides, the groups of huntsmen pushed themselves more and more from each other, the threat of encirclement loomed over them. Around 5 o'clock in the morning, the rangers, suffering continuous losses from the fire of the attackers and the artillery supporting them, lost the ability to provide effective resistance in their positions. A retreat to the river began, which was carried out in a fairly organized manner, under the cover of exposed barriers, which had a sufficient number of light machine guns. The battalions did not crush the Germans, which would have been associated with unnecessary losses.

Instead, the rangers retreating to the river were covered by artillery with a concentrated blow.

After that, the withdrawal quickly turned into a disorderly flight. Chasseurs of steel

retreat to the opposite bank of the Western Litsa. Withdrawal began in other areas. By the morning of July 9, the division regained the position lost during three days of fighting.

Several dozen prisoners were captured on the battlefield, many weapons and corpses of enemy soldiers were found. The captured weapons were handed over to the Northern Fleet for arming the landing squads of sailors. The losses of rangers during this counterattack are, of course, one of the most significant for the entire period of hostilities on the Litsa bridgehead. Soviet sources estimate them at 1500 people,

Oddly enough, but during the interrogation of the prisoners, no one figured out where the enemy battalion got to the nearest rear of the division. For some reason, no one remembered the report of the unit commander, who encountered the rangers at the Bolshaya Litsa trading post on July 4th. And this section of the division's defense remained uncovered. Even after it became clear that the Germans were systematically using the tactics of bypassing battle formations and strikes against rear services and fire support groups, the division headquarters did not establish normal security for the occupied area.

The counterattack of the 52nd division, conducted under the leadership of Major General Nikishin on the night of July 9, was the only successful counteroffensive in the entire period of fighting on the Litsa bridgehead, which lasted more than two months. But the command of the 14th Army and the Northern Front had its own views on the development of events and decided that Major General Nikishin would be more useful in the role of commander of the 14th division, which played an openly auxiliary role in battles, than commanding the 52nd division, which was, in fact, the "key" to Murmansk. With Colonel Veshchezersky, who replaced him in this position, sent from the headquarters of the LenVO, who never argued with the headquarters of the army, the division was not able to carry out a single successful counteroffensive and with great difficulty was able to partially hold its positions.

respite

(July 10-11)

Using the ensuing respite, the army command carried out the necessary rearrangements in the command staff. After the death of Major General Zhurba, Regimental Commissar Volkov, who temporarily commanded the 14th Division, was replaced by Major General Nikishin, who had previously commanded the 52nd SD. Colonel Veshchezersky, head of the combat training department of the Leningrad Military District, was appointed commander of the 52nd division.

The 58th regiment suffered the greatest losses during the German offensive. So far, it has been possible to replenish its rifle companies only by reducing the composition of headquarters and rear units. However, at the same time, the regiment still had no reserves - it was not yet possible to complete the 3rd battalion of the regiment.

Considering the losses suffered by the division during the first German offensive, Veshchezersky decided to temporarily abandon the divisional reserve - the 112th SP was placed on the right flank of the division. This made it possible to reduce the sections of the regiments and create instead of the general divisional regimental reserves in each section. Such tactics were supposed to improve the controllability of units in battle and increase the flexibility of defensive sectors, which played an important role in the specifics of battles in the Arctic.

The first German offensive showed that the huntsmen could not strike on a wide front, since the assault on the hills with good natural shelters required large forces. They were limited to delivering one or two main strikes, while widely using various maneuvering actions. With such tactics of the enemy and an acute shortage of personnel in the division, it was more profitable to have reserves in each sector.

Agitators conduct a conversation with the fighters.

Such reserves amounted to a battalion each in the 112th and 205th regiments, and one company in the 58th, which could be allocated only by reducing the regiment's defense sector by transferring the bridge area to the 205th regiment.

The deployment of all three regiments in one line gave one more advantage, also very important in case of a shortage of people - it was possible to quickly build continuous lines of trenches for squads and platoons, which was extremely difficult in the conditions of the North. The absence of well-equipped positions entailed heavy losses from mortar and artillery fire both on Titovka and in repulsing the first offensive on Zapadnaya Litsa.

After the German attacks on the rear, the observation posts of the artillery battalions were moved to the infantry units. The lack of people in the rifle companies (in the 112th regiment, which kept all three battalions deployed, 60 people remained in the companies) led to the transition from three meals a day to two meals a day for soldiers - so fewer people were distracted to deliver food, which took from 5 to 10 hours, depending on the location of the battalion: all regimental convoys were located in the rear of the artillery positions, so as not to become a victim of another raid by rangers.

Along the positions of the regiments in their rear, it was decided to lay a divisional artillery rocade - due to the impassability of artillery, when the rangers broke through, there was simply nowhere to maneuver, similar problems arose when it was necessary to change positions. And in the sector of the 112th regiment, neither divisional nor regimental artillery could reach its right flank. At the same time, this was supposed to improve the supply of ammunition and food.

However, the construction of the road, carried out by the sapper battalion, proceeded slowly - large boulders that could not be pulled even with the help of horses and light artillery tractors "Komsomolets" had to be blown up on the spot, but there were few explosives, and therefore sappers, as was done hundreds of years ago, often burned bonfires under stones and on boulders, and then poured water on the stones. The swamps that came across were fouled with stones and branches.

On July 10, the first howitzer battalion of the 208th artillery regiment was transferred from the northern flank, where it was unable to maneuver, to the southern. The maneuver was carried out during the day, in direct line of sight of the enemy. The Soviet howitzer battalions were unable to suppress the mountain guns of the rangers, and for a whole hour the battalion moved under fire.

Between fights.

The crews were moved away from the tractors, and emergency teams were stationed away from the road. There were no smoke bombs. They tried to cover the road with the smoke of fires, but dry moss and deadwood burned almost without smoke. The moving tractors were covered only by smoke and dust from exploding German shells. However, the distance for mountain guns, apparently, turned out to be too big. During the hour of shelling, not a single tractor was disabled, and only one

the driver was slightly injured by shrapnel.

The 14th division, transferred under the command of Nikishin, was not yet combat-ready, its regiments were scattered from Rybachy to Murmansk, so its 95th regiment was temporarily reassigned to the 52nd division. The regiment, after the retreat from Titovka, which was more reminiscent of a flight, had 80 people in companies, after they were replenished with artillerymen who remained without guns, and since not only guns were thrown, but also mortars, heavy machine guns and part of light machine guns, they actually lost their combat effectiveness.

Therefore, part of the captured machine guns and mortars captured in battles was transferred to the regiment, and a huge number of agitators were sent to raise morale: as Veshezersky formulated the head of the political department of the division, regimental commissar Orlov, "every fire should have an agitator, a communist or a Komsomol member." After the measures taken, the 95th regiment, although it became possible to use it to cover secondary directions, was withdrawn from the front to the rear of the 52nd division and, until the resumption of the German offensive, was considered the reserve of the army commander.

Second German offensive

(July 12-13)

It was quiet at the front. On July 12, the headquarters of the 52nd division received a report on the results of a search undertaken at night on the left flank of the 58th regiment. The scouts did not even manage to cross the river.

Colonel Veshchezersky, who took command of the division on July 9, personally took up the development of a reconnaissance plan in force. The preliminary considerations were reported by the chief of staff and the chief of artillery, after which everyone agreed to go along with the chief of artillery of the division Kubeev to the observation post of the commander of the 205th SP Shpilev in order to clarify the plan on the ground.

But, as is often the case in war, suddenly all calculations went down the drain. Shortly after talking about the reconnaissance plan, Kubeev reported that the northern artillery group was firing at enemy infantry crossing Zapadnaya Litsa on the right flank of the 112th Infantry Regiment. In the same place, a "crutch" is constantly spinning and dropping leaflets, calling for surrender.

Several small groups of the enemy crossed the river, but did not reach the heights on the front line.

"The battalion commander will not allow them to advance further," the commander of the 112th SP Korotkov calmly assured.

The gunners were less optimistic. Judging by their reports, things looked much more alarming. They continued to fire on new small enemy groups on both banks of the Western Litsa. Then a fairly large pack detachment of the enemy appeared at the crossing.

It became even more alarming when the regimental battery of the 112th SP suddenly shifted its fire to the area of height 274.0. This was already the rear of Korotkov's regimental sector. Half an hour earlier, he assured that the right-flank battalion was successfully repelling the attack, but this time he reported in embarrassment that the enemy had broken through into the depths of the defense and a company from the second echelon had entered the battle. The situation on the right flank was unknown to Korotkov, since his telephone connection with the battalions was interrupted,

the radio station of the battalion commander also fell silent.

"I intend to launch a counterattack with a battalion of the second echelon," the regiment commander summed up.

Having approved his decision, Veshchezersky drew Korotkov's attention to the need to quickly restore contact with the right flank.

Why was the communication of the regiment commander with his battalions broken? The answer to this question was not at all as obvious as it may now seem. At that time, Soviet commanders considered the wire as the main means of communication. The radio was rarely used, although the radios were technically quite reliable. This has been the case since peacetime. At tactical exercises of battalions and even regiments, radio communications were allowed to be used only for reception and for technical negotiations of radio operators. Apparently, they were afraid that foreign intelligence would overhear something. At divisional and larger exercises, the radio stations were busier. But radio communications were so complicated by the long and laborious coding of the text that they were reluctant to resort to them. It seemed much more convenient to use the familiar and trouble-free wired communication in peaceful conditions. It was better for the artillerymen - their commands for firing were allowed to be transmitted openly.

Regimental headquarters often drove regimental radio stations away from the command post. Loss of communication as a symptom of radiophobia was then quite possible and quite common.

Meanwhile, the situation became more and more tense. Already Shpilev reported suspicious movements of small groups of enemy soldiers in front of his front line.

The breakthrough of the defense on the right flank of the 112th regiment was carried out in a way that was not quite usual for the Germans - without artillery preparation and without aviation support. Therefore, the command of the 52nd division continued to doubt that this

a real offensive, assuming that the enemy is conducting deep reconnaissance in force. Therefore, Veshchezersky decided to wait and, apart from a counterattack with one battalion, did nothing significant. Just in case, at the suggestion of Kubeev, two more artillery battalions from the southern group were switched to support infantry.

Scouts.

A solid defense in the new sector of the 112th Infantry Regiment was never created. As a result, the huntsmen, most likely, simply leaked over the front edge of the regiment along unoccupied hollows and now, just as in early July, they again struck from the rear. All evening and almost all night, the battalion sent by Korotkov to counterattack fought. On the morning of July 13, the major reported that the right-flank battalion had withdrawn to Hill 274.0. Second echelon units, he said, held the southern part of this height. From further conversation it turned out that it was not clear how firmly the positions on the heights were held. A division headquarters officer was sent to the regiment to check the situation.

After some time, the Germans began crossing in the area and the left-flank battalion of the 112th regiment, this time with the support of artillery and a small group of dive bombers. Within two to three hours, despite the intense fire of the entire southern artillery group, the rangers advanced a kilometer and a half. Soon, also after strong artillery preparation, they moved to

attack from height 274.0 to the south. As an employee of the headquarters who returned from there reported, by the evening she was completely in the hands of the enemy. The battle was already going south, at a height of 258.3.

Soon the connection with Korotkov was interrupted. To clarify the situation, Veshchezersky no longer had to send a staff officer, but scouts. They returned late at night and reported: Hill 258.3 was occupied by the Germans. To the south of it, small scattered groups of fighters were still defending themselves.

Thus, almost the entire sector of the defense of the 112th regiment was broken through and the enemy was able to move to the east, threatening to simultaneously bypass the 205th regiment from the north. I had to bend its flank, placing a battalion of the second echelon in a position between Lake Krugloye and the river bank.

However, even at night Veshchezersky hoped that Korotkov would organize a defense to the east of the heights he had abandoned. The corresponding order was sent to him with a new divisional reconnaissance group. In addition, the scouts were supposed to find out the situation in the area and deliver spare batteries for

regimental radios. But the scouts, who were trying to get to the 112th regiment along the lowland along the eastern shore of Lake Krugloye, could not get through due to heavy shelling.
could.

On July 14, early in the morning, after artillery preparation, the enemy threw back scattered units of the 112th regiment even further south of the bridgehead they had occupied the day before and began to move east. This was reported by scouts sent by Shpilev. They even managed to bring a prisoner - a private of the 137th German mountain regiment. From the middle of the day, the enemy began attacks against the 205th regiment, but was repulsed by artillery and small arms fire.

The prisoner was interrogated. He didn't know much. They only found out that his battalion had the task of advancing to a height of 258.3 and further to the east.

Considering that the 137th Mountaineer Regiment, which had already moved north of its recent positions at the blown-up bridge, was leading the offensive, the division headquarters made the rather controversial conclusion that units outside the 2nd Mountaineer Division were further south, because the breakthrough front has already reached six kilometers, and this is just the maximum rate for the offensive of the division. The remaining twelve kilometers of the front, stretching south along Western Litsa, require, in the opinion of the headquarters, the cover of the 3rd mountain division. And she could attack no more than 2-3 battalions in a narrow area. Estimating the likely options for the further actions of the 2nd Mountain Division, the headquarters also rejected the possibility of its offensive deep to the east. At the same time, hopes were still pinned on the resistance of the 112th regiment, although it retreated no one knows how far to the east, but, as Veshchezersky hoped, did not lose its combat capability.

From all this, it was concluded that the 2nd Mountain Division, instead of continuing the offensive to the east and stretching its communications, would turn the lead battalions south, towards the dominant height of 314.9. In this case, the rangers will immediately go to areas where there are no units of the division. This will give them the opportunity to quickly bypass the division from the rear and complete the encirclement, cutting off from the Mishukovskaya road.

Having drawn such conclusions, it was no longer difficult to determine countermeasures. It was necessary to send sufficient forces to the area of height 314.9 capable of blocking the path of the strike force of the 2nd Mountain Division. However, the 52nd Division did not have any reserves. In addition, at any moment it could still go to

offensive and the 3rd mountain division. This means that not a single battalion could be withdrawn to the reserve until the directions of new attacks were clarified.

One attack, however, has already been. In the morning, the enemy struck at the right flank of the 205th Infantry Regiment, but was relatively easily repulsed.

Veshchezersky was about to turn to the commander of the 14th Army, when the commander unexpectedly called himself. The army headquarters managed to find the 112th regiment, which, as it turned out, rolled back to the heights south of the Bolshaya Litsa trading post, established contact with it and organized its supply.

As it turned out, off-road the 112th regiment reached the right flank of the division only by the end of July 12, when two battalions of the 205th rifle regiment, defending on Zapadnaya Litsa, were pushed back and the enemy captured a bridgehead on the eastern bank of the river near the mouth and coast of the bay Big Western Face. Required

urgently correct the situation. And the commander of the 112th regiment, Korotkov, again made the right decision: one kilometer north of height 314.9, he imposed a battle on the enemy and deprived him of the opportunity to move freely to Ura Guba. A fierce fight broke out. The enemy was forced to turn around, and although the superiority of forces was on the side of the enemy, the 112th regiment counterattacked - without artillery and air support - held back the rangers, preventing them from entering the column path.

The regiment suffered significant losses in men. Many commanders and political workers of battalions and companies were out of order, the commissar of the regiment, senior political instructor Fominykh, died.

Having reported all this, the army commander agreed with the conclusions of the division headquarters and handed over to the division his "reserve" - the battered 95th rifle regiment.

Encounter battle of the 58th regiment

(July 14-15)

The division headquarters did not trust the combat effectiveness of the 95th regiment. He had almost no automatic weapons and morally had not yet recovered from the defeat at Titovka. Veshchezersky decided to send the 58th regiment to the main direction, not yet bound by battle. And the 95th regiment to transfer its defense sector.

Just in case, Veshchezersky also changed the leadership of the 58th regiment: the commander of the reconnaissance battalion of the division, an experienced major Khudalov, was appointed commander, and the former commander, a young and inexperienced captain, remained his chief of staff.

Setting the task for Khudalov, the chief of staff of the division, Colonel Solovyov, told him the following:

"Your task is to prevent the enemy from breaking through in the direction of the village of Ura Guba. If the enemy manages to develop success in this direction, then the defense of our 52nd will be dismembered, violated in a number of places. Turning to the south, the enemy, in addition, will create a threat to the rear of the division. But we are strengthening the defense on our right flank. By order of Commander V. A. Frolov, the 112th and 58th rifle regiments, a division of the 208th howitzer artillery regiment, and some special units are sent there. Short with troops is already on the way, but there are no roads at all, and the regiment's maneuver is slow."

There was no exact data on the front line on the northern flank of the division; it was also not possible to predict what would happen there during the march of the regiment. Therefore, Khudalov was given only a common goal: to close the direction to the south, approximately in the area of \u200b\u200bheight 314.9, and, having established contact with Korotkov, create a new continuous front of the division's defense jointly with him.

Such a formulation of the task of the regiment quite deliberately predetermined the cautious nature of its actions. The 58th was the DIVISION's last reliable reserve.

The tense combat situation required the regiment to advance to Hill 314.9 as soon as possible. Meanwhile, it was impossible to move quickly along the tundra with carts and artillery. And artillery is indispensable in a collision with superior enemy forces. Therefore, the division headquarters included in the column all

regimental guns, mortars and a few wagons, although this significantly reduced the speed of movement. Ammunition was carried in makeshift packs and carried on the shoulders. Instead of bulky ambulances, the regimental medical station was given comfortable and easy-to-run battalion ambulance carts. A small team was assigned to clear the path.

The division had no experience of a long march of such columns in the mountain tundra. Therefore, Solovyov did not specify the exact date when the regiment should arrive at the place, but limited himself to an indefinite wording: "As soon as possible."

The march could take a long time. Recalling the off-road crossings in Karelia and Finland during the Finnish war, Veshchezersky recommended Khudalov not to make large halts at the same time, but to stop the battalions one by one for three to four hours. This order ensured the continuity of the march and gave some gain in time.

The order of movement, eager to quickly cover the threatened direction, was appointed by the division commander as the next.

The 2nd Battalion of Captain Soldatov was the first to leave, then, having been delayed by almost a day due to the change of the regiment commander, whose arrival had to be expected, the 2nd Battalion of Captain Sharov, behind him, lagging behind by 3-5 kilometers, moved the headquarters with auxiliary services regiment, then - the 3rd battalion of senior lieutenant Grinev, who cleared the column path for artillery, and the artillery itself closed the column.

At the suggestion of Kubeev, a tractor-drawn howitzer battery and a regimental battery of the 112th regiment, which retreated to the Shpilev regiment's sector, were also included in the tail of the common column.

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Transportation of guns in the Arctic.

The political officer of the 58th regiment was battalion commissar Lazarev, a capable political worker who was in good standing at the division headquarters. However, so much depended on the regiment that the commissar of the division, Orlov, found it necessary to visit each battalion. Together with Lazarev, he held short rallies. By evening, the marching columns set off. Soon the commander called. Upon learning that there was no one from the division headquarters in the column of the regiment, he ordered to send to

Khudalov, Chief of Staff of the division Solovyov. And Colonel Solovyov went on horseback to catch up with the regiment.

Having sent the regiment, Veshchezersky instructed the divisional engineer to turn the artillery rocade, the construction of which continued uninterruptedly, following the route of the regiment. But the speed of construction of this additional road could not be more than a kilometer per day - it could come in handy only if it was possible to take up a strong defense on the site.

The weather favored the march. Low clouds and drizzling rain covered the column from enemy air reconnaissance.

From the dawn of July 15, the pressure of the chasseurs on the battalion, which was on the bent flank of the 205th regiment, noticeably intensified. Despite the support of the gunners, by evening he withdrew to the valley of the stream. The battalion commander senior lieutenant Tikhomirov announced uncertainly on the phone:

"A strong enemy surrounds us..."

The reconnaissance moves along the "stone sea".

After such a report, Veshchezersky, who had been noticeably nervous of late, immediately called Shpilev and offered to remove Tikhomirov from his post. But he stood up for the battalion commander, and Veshchezersky did not insist on his proposal. Shpilev scraped together a company and sent Tikhomirov, but he still continued to retreat. As it turned out later, four times superior

his strength.

The division headquarters followed the march of the 58th with understandable impatience. Slowly advancing by the "stone sea", pulling away the rubble, by the morning of July 15, the battalions reached a height of 322.0. We had not yet met the enemy, and everyone was tensely waiting for this moment.

The exciting moment, as usual, came unexpectedly and turned out to be completely inappropriate: Khudalov, calling on the field communication line being laid after the regiment, said that the tail of the regimental column, where he himself was, was suddenly attacked on the flank. Having interrupted the report, Veshchezersky, who continued to freak out, suggested that the major calm down and began to ask questions to clarify the situation.

Khudalov reported that the 3rd and 1st battalions, together with regimental artillery, were on a low pass adjoining the foot of Hill 314.9 from the east. Approaching the pass, Khudalov did not hear any shooting. With him

there were signalmen and sappers, a chemical defense platoon and scouts. Suddenly they were attacked by huntsmen and cut off from the main forces.

After a conversation with Khudalov, Veshchezersky, who was left without a reserve, in an unclear situation, made a sapper battalion employed in the construction of the rockade as such. The division commander continued to be nervous, not knowing the situation, but Khudalov himself could not know it, as it turned out later.

A reconnaissance platoon, moving ahead of the regiment's battalions at a height of 314.9, suddenly stumbled upon enemy rangers there. The platoon withdrew to the site of the 205th regiment. The messenger with the report got lost and reached Khudalov only the next day.

Due to the excessive stretching of the marching order, the 2nd battalion of Captain Soldatov, moving behind the scouts, very quickly found himself surrounded at the foot of the height. Soon the 1st battalion of Sharov, moving along the pass in the direction of the height, also stumbled upon the enemy, and the tail of the column was also fired upon by small German forces. The huntsmen managed to reach the height a little earlier than the 58th REGIMENT.

The divisions of the regiment stopped where they were caught by the enemy attack. Jaegers twice attacked Sharov's battalion with large forces, but Sharov, having 13 heavy machine guns, managed to repulse both attacks. True, the huntsmen, who used the convenient terrain and, thanks to shelters, approached directly to the orders of the battalion, were able to throw grenades at 5 machine guns.

The commander of the reconnaissance platoon, Lieutenant Shpak, having a walkie-talkie, was able to move away from the battle formations of the regiment caught on the road, bypass the rangers attacking Sharov's battalion, and find that "the enemy infantry battalion with mortars on mountain pack horses was being drawn into the gorge near the northeastern slopes of height 314.9. ", which he conveyed in his report.

Khudalov managed to resist the temptation to bring the third battalion into battle and completely abandoned it to accelerate the movement of artillery slowly advancing along the poorly cleared mountain road. Senior Lieutenant Grinev was given the task of first of all ensuring the advancement of a battery of 120-mm horse-drawn mortars to the battlefield, with which Captain Pilevin, the head of artillery, was

shelf.

In support of the 1st battalion, which was fighting back with great difficulty from the superior number of rangers, it was necessary to abandon the communications company of Senior Lieutenant Suslov. Having turned into a chain, the company advanced to the left flank at an accelerated pace. Entering the enemy's flank, the company attacked on the move and pushed the rangers away from the pass.

At that moment, we finally managed to get in touch by radio with Captain Soldatov, whose battalion was surrounded. But Soldatov, not informed of the change in regiment commander made by Veshchezersky, refused to carry out Khudalov's orders, saying: "I don't know any Khudalov."

Khudalov had no choice but to contact Shpak, who was hiding in the hills, by radio and order him "... to get to Soldatov, tell about my appointment, find out the situation there ..."

Meanwhile, the enemy again began to approach the pass. Mortars and machine guns were mounted against Suslov's company, which was holding back its onslaught. Mastery

the Germans, the pass was, in essence, a matter of time. Khudalov, remembering that the reserves discovered by Shpak were heading towards the Germans, was about to go into the battle formations of the 1st battalion in order to try to somehow take advantage of the Germans' attention shifting to Suslov, who hit them on the flank, but at that moment a case intervened ...

A Red Army soldier ran up to Khudalov and reported that there were 200 reinforcements for the 112th SP at the neighboring height. They have been looking for their regiment since last night. There is a fight going on all around and they don't know who to turn to. They have weapons and ammunition.

Khudalov immediately contacted Veshchezersky.

- I am on a small hillock at the foot of the height, - the commander reported

shelf. "The reserves assigned to the one hundred and twelfth have just arrived here. There are two hundred of them. Armed with rifles.

"I am placing this unit at your disposal.

- Thank you.

- Defend at high altitude. Put the units in order, deploy artillery. Send reconnaissance towards the battalions.

- Eat!

Having received permission, Khudalov put senior lieutenant Manaenkov at the head of the unexpectedly appeared replenishment and sent him at the disposal of the battalion commander Sharov. After the numerical superiority of the Germans was compensated by the arriving reinforcements, the situation began to take shape not in favor of the rangers. The Germans launched two more attacks, which were repulsed without much loss. Here again, the presence in the personnel units of the Red Army of a large number of "excellent shooters" who had been qualitatively trained even before the war played a role. In the last, fourth attack, the officer who commanded it was killed.

After that, Sharov's fighters, supported by Khudalov's company and reinforcements, were able to go on the attack without waiting for the 3rd battalion and artillery to approach. The huntsmen were thrown back not only from the pass, but also from Soldatov's battalion, which hit in time to meet them. As a result, the Germans, who started the battle so successfully, suffered a complete rout.

Two officers were captured, dozens of killed rangers remained on the battlefield. By the evening of July 15, the 58th regiment finally concentrated in one place. Artillery units moved up. Soon the rear also arrived. Along the cleared road, where before no transport except reindeer sleds had passed, now, albeit with difficulty, howitzers, which were so lacking, and trucks with ammunition were moving.

Considering that the 2nd mountain division had several more fresh battalions, no further offensive was carried out on its sector. The continuous front of the division's defense was restored. But he was not particularly stable. The 58th regiment occupied eight kilometers of the front from the coast of the bay near the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa colony to a height of 314.9 in a one-echelon formation without reserves. The combat effectiveness of the 112th regiment after heavy fighting was very small.

Since the area of main operations moved to the north, the command post of the division, with the permission of the army headquarters, also moved - to height 322.2. Close to

a permanent telephone line passed through this height, and this ensured direct negotiations with the army command post.

The 112th Regiment relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 58th Regiment at the Bolshaya Litsa trading post and began to organize the defense up to the junction with the 58th Regiment. The replenishment that arrived made it possible to somewhat strengthen the battalions.

On July 16, almost in front of the entire defense zone of the division, the enemy behaved passively, and only in the sector of the 205th regiment did the attacks of the rangers continue. The two battalions of the regiment were forced to pull back a little.

On the same day, units of the northern flank of the division, on the orders of the commander, conducted a short offensive battle in the interests of the landing force landed on the coast, which was trying to strike at the rear and communications of the Germans.

The offensive began in the middle of the day. In preparation for it, the divisional command, as practiced in such cases, moved the divisional command post closer to the site of the main events - directly to height 314.9 and, just in case, placed it next to the command post of the 58th regiment.

However, the strikes of the 58th and 205th regiments, supported from the shore by the strike of the paratroopers, did not bring success. But, fearing the development of an offensive in the sector of the 205th regiment, the rangers themselves withdrew three kilometers to the north.

Third landing

(the 14 th of July)

Literally the next day after the fighting of the second landing ended, the headquarters of the Northern Fleet received disappointing information about the aggravated situation on the land front. Bringing up fresh forces, the enemy crossed the Western Litsa River for the second time, occupied the ill-fated trading post and went on the offensive. The fleet, it seemed, had already exhausted all the possibilities in the formation of landing forces, but the Military Council of the Fleet once again returned to the idea of landing a large landing force in the Titovka Bay area and sent a petition to the Commander-in-Chief of the North-Western Direction himself with a request to allocate the necessary forces.

Voroshilov replied that he no longer had troops, and therefore the well-thought-out plan was again not carried out. However, the commander of the 14th Army had already managed to appreciate the role of amphibious assaults in assisting the coastal flank of the army and offered to land his last reserve in the rear of the advancing Germans - the 325th Infantry Regiment of the 14th Infantry Division under the command of Major Shakito (about 1350 people). The regiment was stationed in the Saida-Guba area, near Polyarny. The fleet supplemented the landing with the first volunteer detachment of sailors (which was formed from the personnel of the base of the submarine brigade and numbered about 150 people) under the command of Senior Lieutenant Simonenko for the first throw.

Due to the lack of weapons, detachments of sailors were armed with captured machine guns and machine guns.

This detachment prepared longer and more carefully than the others formed by the fleet during the first month of the war. For almost two weeks, the Red Navy, selected by the first commander of the detachment, senior lieutenant Khizhnyakov, were taught actions in defense, offensive and reconnaissance. Training was intensively carried out in throwing grenades - future paratroopers were taught to throw grenades "with a lowered check" - with a 2-second delay.

The detachment was partially armed with captured German machine guns and machine guns captured in the battles of July 7-9 on Zapadnaya Litsa. For the first time, a naval detachment was able to receive full combat equipment. The commander of the fleet himself admonished the detachment before the start of the operation, placing great hopes on it.

Due to the limited time, this time the departments of the fleet headquarters were involved in the preparation of the operation, and the documents were developed, albeit overnight, but according to all the rules of theory.

At the same time, someone at the headquarters called the impending operation a "pull-out plaster" - the name stuck and was often used in the future.

The task of landing was assigned by the commander of the fleet to the command of the OVR in writing. The headquarters of the OVR prepared a combat order, compiled a planning table, calculated the landing of troops, laid out the paths of the ships on the maps, outlined their places of approach to the shore, and multiplied the maps on tracing paper. There are quite a few documents. The commanders of the minesweepers, recent fishermen, frightened by the strictness of keeping secret documentation, begged them not to give them written instructions, assuring them that they already firmly grasped their role in the upcoming landing.

The operation was supposed to involve 24 ships and vessels, consolidated into five detachments: three main landing - two minesweepers and three MO boats each, a sabotage detachment, which included three motorized boats, and an artillery support detachment, consisting of the destroyer "Valerian Kuibyshev", Patrol ship "Groza" and three boats MO. The flagship boat, on which were the commander of the OVR Platonov, the commander of the landing and the commander of the landing, went out of order and formation. The start of the landing was scheduled for 4 o'clock in the morning on July 14.

The landing units were loaded in Saida-Guba from the pier. To make it more convenient for the paratroopers, this time the holds of the minesweepers were already equipped with bunks, home-grown

carpenters put together long, strong gangways, along which fighters could quickly and easily run from ships to shore.

The presence of a similar facilitated and accelerated the loading of the landing force and its landing on the shore.

The detachments moved from Saida-Guba to Zapadnaya Litsa on their own. Each commander of the detachment knew exactly the place of approach to the shore allotted to him and himself set the speed of the ships in such a way as to arrive at the agreed time. The weather was non-flying, but the anti-aircraft guns and large-caliber machine guns of the ships were put on immediate alert just in case. From submarines, the detachment was guarded by MO boats. In addition, by order of the fleet commander, three destroyers in Polyarny and a fighter squadron in Vaenga were on high alert. The Kildin Reach and Motovsky Bay the ships passed without interference from the enemy. The landing front was about five kilometers.

According to the approved disposition, two landing detachments entered Andreeva Bay, and the third stopped 10 cables north of it. Artillery support ships remained to maneuver at the entrance to Zapadnaya Litsa Bay. As soon as the boats of the Ministry of Defense began to disembark a detachment of sailors of the first throw, the enemy field artillery battery opened frequent fire on them. The guns of the destroyer "Valerian Kuibyshev" and the patrol ship "Groza" pretty quickly silenced her, but the second enemy battery immediately opened fire. The southernmost place of the landing front - the low-lying coast - was under fire. The fighters have not yet gone ashore, and losses have already appeared.

The artillery support ships were not able to suppress the pack batteries of the enemy mountain artillery, despite all the superiority of their sights, large calibers and trained crews. We had to urgently move the landing site under the rock, which somewhat slowed down the pace of landing, but it was much safer. Ships that had to go through the strait between the western coast of Zapadnaya Litsa Bay and the Lopatkin Islands to land in Andreeva Bay also came under fire from enemy batteries. But MO boats are a small target, and even when passing

they maneuvered at high speeds. Therefore, only one minesweeper was damaged, which was hit by a medium-caliber projectile, which caused minor damage.

The detachment of the first throw landed on the shore.

The gun of the destroyer "Valerian Kuibyshev" is preparing to open fire.

Simultaneously with the landing of the main landing force, a number of distracting actions were taken to disorientate the enemy.

The destroyer "Kuibyshev", the guard ship "Priliv" and small hunters approached the mouth of the Titovka Bay and carried out a demonstration landing. 3 small hunters landed a diverting landing party consisting of 50 fighters west of Cape Pikshuev. Their task was, moving in the direction of the village of Titovka, to disorganize the rear of the enemy. These actions helped to pull the enemy forces away from the main landing site and made it difficult for the Germans to determine the direction of the main attack.

All troops landed on the territory occupied by the enemy and, turning into battle formations, entered the battle. But the few German patrols retreated to the Bolshaya Litsa trading post without getting involved in serious clashes and without putting up significant resistance. The ships continued to support the paratroopers with ineffective but intense fire. In two hours, about 1,500 people were landed, while the losses were small.

However, the unsuppressed German battery, having oriented itself in the situation, managed to sink the barge that delivered guns and mortars, and the landing force was left without its own firepower.

With the barge sunk by enemy artillery fire, only one 76-mm gun and several mortars were saved.

Again, the OVR ships were instructed to maintain constant communication with the landing force and supply it with everything necessary. For this purpose, a landing base was organized near Cape Palets, not far from the Lopatkin Islands: a small pontoon pier was fortified and camouflaged, to which small vessels could moor, and ammunition depots were built in the ground. It was also established the continuous duty of motorized boats, which carried out the supply of the landing force. Usually, they tried to finish all the transfers of boats and motorboats in non-flying weather or at night, and during the day they defended under the rocks, hiding from enemy aircraft. But it happened that the situation forced them to act under air strikes. In this case, the motorboats had a well-established technique: with the advent of aircraft, stick the motorboat with its nose to the nearest shore, and hide the team in the stones, leaving only machine-gun crews on the deck to reduce possible losses.

The paratroopers of the volunteer detachment knocked out the Germans from the heights they used to conduct artillery fire on the landing area, and the 325th regiment began to advance towards the Bolshaya Litsa trading post.

Height 314.9

(July 18)

Now, in front of the line of defense of the 58th regiment, the three-headed height 314.9 rose steeply upwards, dominating the surrounding area. In depth, the height extended for more than two kilometers, while all three of its peaks formed a triangle, the base of which was located in the east-west direction, and the opposite peak was in the north. The height was occupied by a battalion of rangers, as it turned out later, it was the 2nd battalion of the 137th mountain regiment.

The position of the regiment was extremely unfavorable. The enemy from a height had excellent visibility, and he controlled the column route to Ura-Guba with fire.

The divisions of the regiment deployed opposite the height with the calculation of the maximum cover of the column route to Ura-Guba. The extreme left flank of the regiment was occupied by the 3rd battalion, whose positions were covered from the left flank by Lake Wild. To the right, to the column path to Ura-Guba, the defense of the 1st battalion stretched, and then the 2nd battalion covered this path with a front from north to south.

From these positions, it was necessary to attack the height, and this had to be done at a high combat pace - until the Germans brought up forces sufficient for both effective defense and for going on the offensive.

Intelligence data indicated that the Germans would most likely opt for the second option.

The huntsmen carried out only minimal engineering training for defense at the height, they were poorly sheltered from artillery fire. In fact, their units only adopted the standard defensive configuration for the Germans - they were divided into compact groupings, concentrating on areas of height advantageous for defense, concentrating firepower in them. Such sections themselves were poorly fortified - it seemed that the Germans, having pulled up their forces, were going to go on the offensive from these positions in the very near future.

As often happened in the Arctic, the regiment, going on the offensive with an incorrect assessment of the enemy's forces, itself risked being overturned and thrown back even farther than its original positions. And behind the positions occupied was a strategically important column route to Ura-Guba, so the battle plan was drawn up so that the regiment, in any development of the situation, was able to cover the exits to the column route, excluding the rangers from breaking through to it.

Of all three peaks, the eastern one was the key one. The most convenient for the attack was its eastern slope. It was more gentle than the others. But most of the German firepower was also concentrated on it. The steep southern slope of the height, resting on Lake Dikoye, was covered by the enemy with the weakest fire. Apparently, he considered this area inaccessible for offensive operations. It was he who was chosen to deliver the main blow.

After mastering the eastern peak, it was planned to direct the main forces of the regiment to the northern one. The starting position was chosen at the very height, in a dead, unobserved and unshootable space, in order to overcome the distance to the enemy with one swift throw.

Artillery fire control was centralized, but battalion commanders were also given the right to call for fire. They could also correct it through the main observation post.

The assault on height 314.9 began at 4 am on July 18. Guns and mortars opened fire on the identified enemy firing points. The battalions moved in chains to the heights: the 1st - Captain Sharov and the 3rd - Senior Lieutenant Grinev walked

secretly along the steep southern slope, the 2nd - by Captain Soldatov - along the eastern, gentle slope. But the attackers were met by unexpectedly strong enemy mortar fire. And he grew. There was no rapid progress. The chains lay down, although the German machine guns were still silent. There was a pause in the attack. It became clear that the planned plan did not work, the Germans clearly had more firepower than intelligence revealed, and if the infantry continued to advance in chains, after the Germans opened fire from all types of weapons, the losses could be so great that there would be no one to take the height.

The regiment's chief of staff, Captain Saltykov, suggested that the regiment commander, Major Khudalov, change the battle formation of the 1st and 3rd battalions and move along the steep slopes not in a chain, but in small groups. In groups it is easier to bypass the firing points and attack along the folds of the terrain.

Immediately instructions were given to the battalions, and they began to reorganize the battle formations. The regrouping of battle formations was not slow to affect the course of the battle. The pace of movement of the battalions immediately increased.

Soon success began to emerge in the 3rd Battalion's sector of attack. A platoon of junior lieutenant Lyagun, reinforced with a company mortar and a light machine gun, advancing on one of the spurs of the heights hanging over Lake Dikoye, discovered a few firing points of rangers, approached them and captured them after a short hand-to-hand fight.

The 1st battalion could not advance, but held down the enemy forces, preventing them from being transferred to more threatened areas.

The 2nd battalion, advancing along a gentle slope, had a harder time. His right-flank company was constantly counterattacked by the rangers, and the left flank rested on the rock. As a result, the Germans, holding back the offensive of the battalion on one flank with weak forces, concentrated attacks on it on the other.

Jaeger counterattacks on the flank of the battalion followed one after another. The battalion was no longer advancing, but defending itself. This tactic of rangers was rather unusual. The battalions had not yet had time to approach the defensive positions of the enemy at the top of the height, the Germans had not yet fought back with all their firepower, but instead they had already begun to counterattack.

The Germans clearly sought to fight on the slopes of the heights, without pulling it to the top. The steep slopes near it were convenient for defense - it was difficult to advance along them, but retreating along them under the onslaught of the enemy was generally tantamount to a death sentence.

Height attack.

Jaegers in a position equipped with stones and disguised with moss. Gradually, the counterattacks of the rangers, combined with strong enemy fire on the left flank, began to bring them success. The battalion commander requested artillery support. It was impossible to allow the enemy to throw the battalion off the slope and the rangers to concentrate their attacks on the battalions advancing along the southern slope. On a steep slope, the rangers could not only overturn, but completely destroy the advancing battalions.

Khudalov ordered Soldatov to cover the counterattacked flank with fire from the battalion's machine-gun company.

"You still have a mortar company, use that as well, but do everything to keep the enemy's attention focused on your battalion. This is the essence of your task," he transmitted over the radio.

Radio communication in this battle worked exemplary, which happened in general not often. The battalion commanders reported the situation every 10 minutes, and the control of the battle with the regimental command post was not lost even for a minute.

Soon the small-arms fire from the front against the 2nd Battalion weakened.

Having received a report on this, Khudalov immediately gave the order to attack the 1st and 3rd battalions, fearing a possible regrouping of forces by the Germans. The artillery made a five-minute fire raid, after which the battalions went on the attack and began to move up the slopes. Jaegers and here occupied the defense far from the top. Behind the rocks, stones and bushes that the rangers used as shelters, fierce fights began to ensue. The commander of the most advanced company, Lieutenant Rozhishchin, received two wounds, but continued to lead the battle. Jaegers began to retreat to the reverse slopes

height.

From the western slopes, the rangers were able to launch a counterattack with forces of up to two companies here. The counterattack was supported by intense fire from German company mortars. There was nothing to support the attacking battalions - all the mortars were already fighting, and the regiment's artillery chief, on Khudalov's order for fire support, reported that artillery fire could no longer help repulse the counterattack. The sides came together too close, and it was possible to hit your own ...

The outcome of the battle was decided by the platoon commander of the machine-gun company of the 3rd battalion, junior lieutenant Ryabov. His platoon, rising to a height, opened fire from three

machine guns on the rangers advancing in a chain. The rangers, however, immediately spotted the machine gunners and opened mortar fire on them. Two machine-gun crews went out of action almost simultaneously, and only one fighter survived in the third. The platoon commander himself lay down behind the machine gun and continued to fire at the enemy. A few minutes later, a close explosion of a mine and his machine gun was disabled. Ryabov was shell-shocked by fragments of a mine and wounded in the head and right arm.

But time has been won. Battalion commander Grinev regrouped his forces and threw the battalion at bayonets. When the fighters ran past Ryabov, his wounds were carefully bandaged by the surviving machine gunner, not noticing that the platoon commander was already dead. After a hand-to-hand fight, in which Grinev was seriously wounded, the rangers began to retreat. The battalions began to climb the southern slope to the top and go out to the western slope.

The second battalion during the battle on the southern slope continued to pin down the German forces on the eastern slope. One of his observers found to the right of the battalion a column of chasseurs with pack horses approaching the height along one of the hollows. A machine-gun company entered the battle with the column, and then a mortar company. Conducting rapid fire, the crews tried to prevent the rangers from deploying in battle formation and installing mortars and heavy machine guns. Knowing that the outcome of the battle depended on their blow, the huntsmen tried to turn around under fire. During the battle, about 20 pack horses were killed. Bearing losses, the rangers managed to disable most of the machine-gun crews here too. The company commander Lieutenant Shapkin and the platoon commander Junior Lieutenant Starovoitov were wounded. But the losses of the chasseurs were so great that after they defeated the machine-gun company, they themselves were overturned by the blow of the only rifle platoon of Lieutenant Kremenchuk. The rangers had to retreat to the nearest hollow, where they continued to fire at the mortar company.

In the absence of roads, the rangers had to deliver ammunition to the battlefield only with the help of horses.

The battalions completely occupied the East Height and were already advancing towards the North, when they were again stopped by mortar fire and the fire of German mountain guns. A howitzer division opened fire on the positions of German artillery, after which a German reconnaissance aircraft flew in from the Barents Sea.

Fearing an air strike, the regimental commander ordered the battalions to disperse the battle formations.

But there was no air raid. The plane that arrived turned out to be a spotter. The fire was opened by a division of 105-mm mountain howitzers recently brought up by the Germans to the bridgehead, which, by adjusting fire from the air, forced the Soviet division to cease fire.

But the time won could not help the rangers in the absence of sufficient reserves. The command post of the regiment was moved to Vostochnaya, and a new attack was prepared from there.

Since the northern height had no independent significance, the enemy did not put up stubborn resistance on it. After the artillery of the regiment resumed fire support, the fire of the German machine guns soon weakened. Covered by mortar fire, the Germans quickly withdrew to previously prepared positions at a height of 275.0. Convinced that the enemy's defense at Hill 275.0 was strong and multi-tiered, the battalions began to consolidate in their positions. Seven hours after the start of the battle, height 314.9 was completely

busy.

One against a hundred

(July 18)

The Germans found enough forces to quickly localize the actions of the landing, which did not lead, as expected, to the diversion of their forces from the main direction. More details about how the combat operations of the landing took place will be described below. A key role in the ensuing battles was played by the fierce battles that began on July 16 for the hills, which served as the main defensive positions.

Similar battles continued throughout the day on July 18, when the Germans struck at the right flank of the landing force, trying to reach its rear. The attacks of the superior forces of the rangers had to be repulsed by very small detachments stretched along the line of the hills, which, however, occupied advantageous positions. On this day, at one of these heights, there was a unique case of repelling an attack by an entire company of the enemy by one person.

It is worth telling about the course of this battle in more detail, since it perfectly demonstrates what tactics both sides used in these fierce battles, conducting military operations in the specific conditions of the Arctic, where the battles took place, as it were, on three tiers: on the tops of the hills, on their slopes and in hollows between them.

Vasily Kislyakov.

Senior Sergeant Vasily Kislyakov, assistant platoon commander of the 1st volunteer detachment of sailors of the Northern Fleet, commanded a squad that held one of the heights. Other sections of the platoon also defended each in height. The fighters concentrated on the top and fired only from rifles, since the only light machine gun in the squad did not work, as it turned out later, due to incorrect assembly.

The huntsmen were looking for a weak point in the sailors' defense line, often rising to attacks with insignificant forces and immediately stopping them. Noticing that there was no machine-gun fire from above, the Germans began to concentrate opposite her for a decisive attack. Kislyakov, who was on the reverse slope of the height, but having heard that the machine gun was not participating in the battle, ran to him, knowing from the experience of previous battles how this could end, went over him and took an advantageous position - in a pit, somewhat lower down the slope, but covered from above by a low-hanging rocky visor from grenade throws.

The huntsmen, who noticed the absence of machine-gun fire, really quickly concentrated in front of the slope of the height and tried to get close to the grenade throw distance with one jerk. They were met by rifle and machine-gun fire from a distance of about 50 meters. The Germans hurriedly rolled back and began intensive shelling with mortars and machine guns.

The squad lost one man killed and three wounded during the repulse of the attack.

Kislyakov sent a messenger to a neighboring height with a request to send several people and another machine gun, since it was already clear that the Germans would try to break through the line of defense here. After the shelling, which turned out to be fruitless, the Germans repeated the attack. When it was reflected, another sailor was killed and two more were wounded.

One after another, Kislyakov sent three more messengers, and he no longer asked for people, but at least for ammunition - a lot of cartridges were spent to keep the rangers away. The rangers, who did not expect such stubborn resistance with such a small number of defenders, changed tactics. They stopped

attempts to get close and opened aimed fire from carbines and machine guns at each of the defenders of the height. The sailors were pressed against the stones.

At that moment, the last messenger returned and reported that the platoon was no longer on the next height, obviously, he had retreated to a reserve position. Kislyakov decided to do the same, but it turned out that the Germans, under the cover of aimed fire, had already begun a detour maneuver and were climbing to a height along a steep side slope.

A pair of grenades thrown from above forced the Germans to roll back. To make it more convenient to defend, the sailors retreated to the top of the hill, where there was less protected space, and the rocky slopes were steeper. The amount of ammunition continued to decrease. Kislyakov gave the order to throw grenades only at groups of Germans, and to destroy single rangers with aimed fire from close range. There were still 5 disks left for the machine gun, which Kislyakov decided to keep as far as possible to the end.

Thus, it was possible to repulse another attack, but there was already nothing to fight back. The huntsmen undertook a new detour, already from two sides, since the proximity to the top made it possible to carry it out quickly. Seeing this, Kislyakov sent all the wounded from the height, ordering to leave grenades and unloaded cartridges in weapons.

The departing sailors were able to leave only three grenades and several dozen rounds of ammunition. With single shots, the 5 remaining sailors covered the retreat of the wounded, after which Kislyakov collected all the remaining grenades (there were 6 of them) and ordered them to leave, hoping to cover their retreat with machine gun fire, to which 4 discs still remained.

The squad leader climbed to the very top of the height, from which its three slopes were visible. Loaded rifles were scattered around. The fighters crawled away, and Kislyakov was left alone at the height. At first, he fired in all directions from the unfolded rifles, so that the rangers would not notice the withdrawal from the heights for as long as possible. But the Germans soon figured out the situation, and the last attack followed quickly and immediately from three sides.

Shooting bursts at half a disk and throwing three grenades, Kislyakov managed to beat her off as well. But the cartridges for the machine gun ran out, and there was nothing to fight back with. By this time, the Germans already knew that one person remained on the height. They did not attack immediately, but began to offer to surrender.

Postcard dedicated to the feat of Vasily Kislyakov.

Kislyakov dismantled the machine gun, scattered its parts around and picked up a German machine gun. However, having already had sufficient experience in combat, he had no illusions about his chances. The case helped. The huntsmen were in no hurry and acted with the utmost care. They had the task of squeezing the Russians from the line of heights occupied along the front, and the pace was not important to them, it was more important to avoid unnecessary losses. The rangers dealt with the height for about 7 hours - in fact, before the defenders used up ammunition.

During this time, the messengers were able to find their platoon in a reserve position, which also suffered losses. A company of the 325th joint venture was moved out of the reserve. Already approaching the height, the reinforcements met sailors retreating from the height, carrying the wounded. They learned from them that the squad leader had remained to cover their retreat on high. With an immediate blow, the companies of the rangers were thrown back from the heights to their former positions, and Kislyakov managed to join his own.

For this battle, Senior Sergeant Kislyakov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of August 13, 1941.

German response

(July 13 - August 10)

The repeated landing operations actively carried out in the area of Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay by the Northern Fleet to support the coastal flank of the 14th Army could not but attract the attention of the Germans, who began to search for effective countermeasures.

In early July, the Germans transferred the 6th destroyer flotilla to Varanger Fjord, which consisted of five destroyers of the Raeder type - 7-4, 7-7, 7-10, 7-16, 7-

20, then the 8th Torpedo Boat Flotilla and two Submarine Hunter Flotillas. Three Norwegian destroyers of the Steg type, Norwegian minelayers of the Gloman and Laugen type, an auxiliary cruiser Bremse, ten Norwegian patrol ships were also deployed

of various types, ten minesweepers, ten patrol boats of the type of Soviet high-speed sea hunters and six long-range submarines of the O-67 type.

In order to divert the forces of the fleet from Motovsky Bay, on the coast of which the fate of Murmansk was decided, German destroyers conducted five raids on the communications of the Northern Fleet between the Kola Bay and the White Sea.

July 13 at Fr. Kharlov, five destroyers attacked two former trawlers, armed and converted into minesweepers of the EPRON (diving service) detachment - "RT-32" and "RT-67" at the beginning of the war, towing underwater fuel tanks from Murmansk to Lokan. The task of guarding the minesweepers was carried out by the Pasat patrol ship under the command of Senior Lieutenant Okunevich.

At 2 o'clock in the morning, despite the inclement weather, the detachment was found flying at a strafing German plane. An hour and a half later, in the area of Kharlov Island, signalmen RT-67 found at a distance of twenty-five to

three cable destroyers of the enemy, heading southeast, across the course of the detachment. Two more destroyers were at sea, northeast of the Gavrilovsky lighthouse, and most likely covered the actions of the first three destroyers. The latter, without changing course and speed, began shelling the lead ship of the RT-67 detachment.

The Pasat patrol ship, which had only recently been fishing for cod, together with both fishing trawlers now sailing under its guard, armed with two 45-mm cannons and two machine guns, went towards the German ships, as soon as they began to fire, and put up a smoke screen between them and detachment. Having made this maneuver, the commander of the Passat, Senior Lieutenant Okunevich, ordered both trawlers to go to the shore in order to take refuge in the Gavrilovskaya Bay, past which the detachment followed, and immediately reported on the radio on a wave of patrol ships about the attack of enemy destroyers. At the same time, the Passat gunners returned gunfire at the German ships in order to divert their attention and enable the RT-67 to get out of the shelling.

Still failed to divert attention. The advantage of the enemy, especially at such a distance, allowed the enemy destroyers to fire on both ships. So far, only the RT-32 remained out of the shelling, covered with a smoke screen set by the Passat, and began to retreat to Gavrilovskaya Bay. The first salvo, directed towards the lead ship, did not harm it: the shells fell short in front of the trawler's bow. The second salvo of the RT-67 was covered: one shell knocked down the mast, another pierced the side, exploded in the engine room and broke the pipeline, the third hit the stern and disabled the engine refrigerator. Having lost speed, the trawler stopped, and its commander, given the hopeless position of the wrecked and shot ship, ordered the boats to be lowered to save the crew.

Meanwhile, the enemy destroyers were moving on the same course, continuing the intensive shelling of the Passat and RT-67 with high-explosive shells, as well as tracer shells from anti-aircraft guns. The tracer shells were with remote fuses designed to destroy flying targets, and exploded in the air, hitting people who were at combat posts, decks and bridges of the ships being fired with shrapnel. The main fire of the enemy destroyers, firing three-gun volleys already at close range (from ten to fifteen cables), was now directed at the patrol ship and partly at the RT-32, which went ashore, into Gavrilovskaya Bay.

The unequal battle continued, but its outcome was a foregone conclusion, no matter how hard the Passat crew tried to heroically defend the wrecked lead ship, deprived of its course. Soon, two columns of flame rose above the bow and stern of the guard ship, and the roar of explosions was heard. The ship began to quickly sink with its bow, but the stern gun, which had one man visible, did not stop returning fire on the enemy.

As soon as the sea swallowed the patrol ship, one of the boats launched from the lead ship hurried to the place of its death. It was possible to pick up two people in it, the remaining twenty-two of those on board the Passat died.

Meanwhile, the destroyers' fire had already concentrated on the wrecked trawler, which was a convenient target for a torpedo salvo. And yet, the torpedoes fired by the enemy did not reach the target; only one of them passed at a distance of three or four meters from the stern of a stationary vessel, deprived of any opportunity to maneuver and evade hits. Then the destroyers resumed gunfire. After another volley that covered the ship, the RT 67 sank very quickly along with everyone who had not had time to get into the boats by this time.

The German destroyer closest to the place where the boats were moving at full speed, leaving behind the rest of the ships of her detachment to the north-west, swept past them, firing from machine guns. At the site of an unequal battle, two bullet-riddled, half-flooded boats remained with twelve people in them, seven of whom were wounded during machine-gun fire.

The sea around was deserted: the RT-32 nevertheless managed to reach the Gavrilovskaya Bay and throw itself ashore, only seven of the twenty-five crew members remained unharmed on board.

Senior Lieutenant Kulagin took command of the boats. He brought the boats to the bay, where emergency medical care was provided to the wounded.

Of the 101 people aboard the ships, 28 were rescued by flying boats, with one MBR-2 crashed.

During the battle, which lasted about an hour, two ships and seventy-three people were killed. During this battle, the flagrantly low readiness of the main forces of the fleet was revealed: the report of the Passat commander Okunevich and the military commissar Vyatkin about the attack of enemy destroyers was received by radio at the very beginning of the battle, and the order to go to sea of the first group of destroyers ("Thundering", "Swift" and "Loud") followed only at four hours and fifty minutes, an hour and a half later, that is, in fact, after the end of the battle. The second group of destroyers ("Kuibyshev" and "Uritsky") left even later - at six o'clock and minutes. Undertaken by both groups, which connected at the exit from the Kola Bay, the search for enemy destroyers, of course, turned out to be useless.

No conclusions were drawn from the tragedy.

On July 23, four German destroyers left the Norwegian skerries at sea and headed for the Soviet coast, which was established in time by aerial reconnaissance. It was not possible to keep a constant watch over them as they advanced: along the entire Murmansk coast, except for the coastal strip ten to fifteen miles wide, there was a wall of the usual summertime fog.

Around midnight, the German destroyers were again spotted by reconnaissance aircraft in the Lokanki area, after which they again disappeared to the north behind a wall of fog.

At that time, the Meridian hydrographic vessel, designed to service lighthouses on the coast, was on the Semioostrovsky roadstead, where it received families of lighthouse attendants, who were supposed to be delivered to Arkhangelsk. The radio warning of the German destroyers was received on the hydrographic ship at one in the morning along with the order to take cover in

bay Vostochnaya Litsa. The commander of the Meridian, Captain-Lieutenant Egorov, however, for unknown reasons, was delayed in carrying out the order and went to sea only an hour and a half after the order was transferred to him a second time. At three o'clock the hydrographic vessel was still only at the entrance to the bay assigned to it for shelter. There, at the entrance, four German destroyers of the Raeder type overtook him. Yegorov tried to escape into the fog.

But in conditions of limited visibility, the German destroyers misidentified the survey vessel as a 2000 brt tanker. and opened extremely accurate fire directly from the detection distance, which was 30 cables. The very first shell that hit the Meridian smashed the radio room to pieces.

The second hit destroyed the bridge and interrupted the main pipeline. The rudder jammed, and the ship lost speed and control. A fire started. The fire engulfed the barrels of gasoline fixed on the upper deck, which flowed into the sea and continued to burn on the water. There were dead and wounded. Through the holes in the engine room and the bow hold, water began to flow.

The crew tried to save the doomed ship. Second assistant commander Lobov, sailors Gagarin, Bestuzhev, Vityazev, Dyakov, radio operator Grebenshchikov and others, led by senior assistant Lieutenant Mikhailov, put out the fire on the upper deck. But when they realized that they couldn't control the fire, they handed out life belts and began to prepare improvised rescue equipment. The engine crew behaved heroically. Mechanic lieutenant Dubrovin and senior minder Zavarzin, struggling with incoming water, died in the engine room. The stokers Churkin and Tarasova were burned by the steam and drowned along with the ship. When Yegorov realized that only a few minutes remained before the death of the Meridian, he gave the order to leave the ship. People rushed overboard and, clinging to the floating debris, tried to sail away from the burning gasoline. The commander was the last to leave.

For many years, the story about the execution of passengers and crew from machine guns, told in Soviet literature, had no actual confirmation. Five women and three children died on the ship and during the evacuation from it, but all only from shrapnel wounds. Bullet wounds were not reported in the report on the death of the ship, as well as in the documents on the investigation of this tragedy, in which the commander of the Meridian was found guilty. The rest of the crew and passengers were rescued by fishing boats. 46 people died on the Meridian, only they managed to save

AND

Enemy destroyers, having sunk the Meridian and fired at the nearby village of Zakhrebetnoye, went into the fog.

Battle of the Pasat patrol ship with German destroyers. From a painting by P.P. Pavlinov.

The planes raised from the airfields, as soon as a message was received about German ships near Lokanka, arrived in time for the place of the sinking of the Meridian a few minutes after the death of the ship. The destroyers managed to hide in the fog, but were soon discovered: the fog was streaked. Attempts to cover themselves with smoke screens to avoid targeted bombing did not help either. At 5 o'clock, as a result of a raid by 8 bombers, one of the German destroyers was damaged, slowed down, began to fall behind and was attacked by a second group of bombers, after which it stopped, all shrouded in steam and smoke.

Soon, a group of Messerschmitts BE-110 appeared over the wrecked German ship to cover it, starting a battle with a group of naval reconnaissance. As a result, 2 MBR-2s were damaged, and one GTS made an emergency landing in the Porchnikha Bay, where it was finished off by German destroyers already on the water. Then fog crept in, excluding further air action. The command of the Northern Fleet sent submarines to the area to destroy the damaged destroyer, but the search turned up nothing.

On August 10, at the Kildin reach, German destroyers during the last raiding operation discovered the patrol ship SKR-12 Tuman. At 04:25, Tuman's signalers found three enemy destroyers at a distance of 50-55 cables (they were Beitzen, Sheman and Ekoldt). Forming a ledge, the destroyers were heading towards the patrol ship, which was moving in zigzags, adhering to the general course of the patrol.

"Fog", having found enemy ships, turned to the left and increased its speed in order to timely leave under the cover of coastal batteries. Simultaneously with this maneuver, a battle alert was played on the patrol ship and a message was sent on a wave of patrol ships.

The destroyers also increased their speed and, as soon as the distance between them and the Fog was reduced to 25 cables, they opened fire on it from six guns: two from each ship.

The first salvo turned out to be a migratory one; however, fragments of a shell that exploded nearby on the Fog interrupted the antennas. The patrol ship lost radio communications, which could not be restored. He only had time to make a turn to the right and put a smoke screen between himself and the enemy. The maneuver was

Unfortunately, useless: the smoke screen was blown away by the wind and the "Fog" at the moment of the turn again became visible to the enemy.

Enemy gunners covered the patrol ship from the second salvo: fragments of shells hit the hull. The third volley damaged the stern, caused a fire, killed the steering cable, disabled the steering and damaged the stern gun, the commander of the ship, Senior Lieutenant Shestakov, was thrown overboard by the blast wave, whom it was not possible to find later.

The course of the "Fog" has noticeably decreased. One after another, volleys covered the wrecked ship; he already had hits in the bridge, wheelhouse and forecastle, the chimney was demolished and the cargo boom was broken. Fragments of the next projectile pierced a barrel with a smoke-forming substance, while the Red Navy, who put up a smoke screen, and the ship's senior political instructor Strelnik, who was bypassing the posts, were killed. Despite significant damage and a fire that engulfed the superstructures, the patrol ship tried to fight off the destroyers from the bow gun, but the destroyers that were behind were out of her sector of fire for almost the entire time of the battle. The personnel of the "Fog" simultaneously fought an unequal artillery battle and an increasingly complicated struggle for the survivability of the ship - with a fire and with an increase in buoyancy due to new holes.

After the death of the commander, Lieutenant Rybakov took command of the ship. During the battle, the commander of the BCH-1-4, Lieutenant Bukin, knowing that the Naval flag was lowered for the night, ordered to raise it; the helmsman of the Red Navy Semyonov, who had a serious wound in his arm, and the radio operator of the senior Red Navy soldier Blinov, under enemy fire, raised the flag.

The help provided to the patrol ship by a battery from Cape Set-Navolok, which opened fire on the Nazi destroyers, was belated and could not change its fate: by that time it had already had eleven direct hits. The buoyancy of the ship decreased catastrophically, and at five thirty minutes the launch of the boats began. 37 people got into two boats, after which the "Fog" began to list to starboard and sank at 5 hours and 50 minutes. Together with him, 15 people were killed (they were killed by fragments of shells, mainly at the beginning of the battle). Coastal battery No. 11 (four 180-mm guns) opened fire on the destroyers only at 4.08 from a distance of 115 kbt, after which the ships immediately turned away to the open sea, increased speed to 31 knots and dropped rafts with smoke bombs into the water. The volleys of the battery fell short, and at 4.15 she stopped firing. A minute later, battery No. 7 (four 130-mm guns) opened fire, which soon also stopped due to undershoots. In total, they managed to make six and four volleys, respectively.

The enemy destroyers, fired upon by the Set-Navolok coastal battery, covered themselves with a smoke screen and began to retreat to the northwest.

The enemy destroyers fired artillery for 13 minutes and fired up to a dozen six-gun salvos during the battle.

Aviation joined in the pursuit. Although only seven Pe-2 and SB bombers of the 72nd Air Regiment participated in the raids, at 6.32 a pair of "pawns" managed to plant bombs next to the Beitzen, as a result of which a severe accident occurred on the destroyer in the engine room. Damaged ship escorted

The Ekoldt left for Narvik, and then, together with the Sheman, which had a malfunction in the car, went to Germany for repairs.

Simultaneously with the actions of destroyers at the airfields of Northern Finland and Norway in Luostari, Kirkenes (Soldier Bay), Lakselven (Banak), Hebukten, Tromso, Bardufos, Narvik and Buda, the number of bombers increased, which, in turn, began a stubborn hunt for warships Northern Fleet. July 20, they managed to sink the destroyer Swift

It was one of the best modern ships, transferred from the Baltic in early 1940. On trials in the Kola Bay, he reached speeds of up to 40 knots. In the first days of the war, the destroyer, having left the repair, participated in the hostilities. Behind him was one downed enemy aircraft.

On July 20, the destroyer Stremitelny entered the Ekaterinskaya harbor of Polyarny and anchored off the rocky coast of Mount Vestnik. The practice of settling under rocks was generally widespread in the Northern Fleet at the beginning of the war. It seemed to the command of the fleet and the commanders of the ships that a ship standing under a rock was more difficult to detect and difficult to approach it, and it was difficult for bombers to aim and dive at it when approaching. The commanders of the sea hunters were the first to fall into this delusion. The Germans really often passed by the nimble boats standing under the rocks, either not seeing them, or not wanting to get involved. But the destroyer, which was an enviable target, could not count on such negligence.

Destroyer "Swift".

The commander of the Swift, Captain 2nd Rank Vinogradov, was summoned to the headquarters of the Northern Fleet to clarify the task of conducting the convoy. The weather was clear and sunny. There was almost no wind.

During the day, a German reconnaissance aircraft flew over the harbor, but no measures were taken to strengthen the air defense. The number of VNOS posts was minimal.

"Swift", after the enemy reconnaissance aircraft passed, no order was given to change the parking lot.

Parking in Ekaterininskaya harbor was considered safe, although shortly before this, the Junkers launched a surprise raid on the destroyer Kuibyshev, air bombs fell not far from the destroyer without damaging it. Then the destroyer was ordered to move to Tyuvu Bay, opposite Polyarny. But here, too, a single "Junkers" hunter tried to attack him. A single bomb dropped

fell quite far from the ship, but the commander requested permission to transfer the ship to Murmansk, under the cover of a more powerful air defense. The operational duty officer at the fleet headquarters allowed the passage. The Kuibyshev arrived in Murmansk at the time of the air raid, the commander turned back, preferring to keep on the move in the bay.

The commander's decision was correct. However, as Rear Admiral Golovko, commander of the Northern Fleet, wrote in his diary, "the destroyer's crossings served as a pretext for jokes, the commander, they say, is afraid of enemy aircraft. Well, who wants to get ridiculed. As a result, the aircraft began to be treated with some disdain."

This neglect, perhaps, manifested itself on that ill-fated day - July 20. The Swift, as soon as the enemy reconnaissance aircraft passed, had to change the parking lot, but no one, including the base officer on duty, made such an order, apparently, it was believed that the ship, already leaving the harbor, would have time to do it before the possible appearance of enemy bombers.

At 17.25, from behind Mount Vestnik, from the direction of the sun, German bombers suddenly appeared: 6-8 Junkers-88 aircraft - and immediately attacked the destroyer. The air raid signal sounded late, and the anti-aircraft batteries managed to fire only a few shots.

Aircraft dropped bombs, diving from a height of 200-400 m, four of them hit the ship. One, weighing 100 kg, pierced the foundation of the first torpedo tube and exploded in the engine room on the starboard side in the area of the 124th frame. The second and third (both 100 kg each) pierced the deck in the region of the 100-104th frames and exploded in the third boiler room. The fourth, presumably 500 kg, landed in the first boiler room. A huge column of smoke and flame rose above the ship. The destroyer immediately broke into two parts, and its stern and bow rose above the water. Finally, the fifth, 100-kg bomb exploded next to the ship, 2-5 m from the port side.

Broken "Swift" after an air raid.

Within two or three minutes, the stern section sank, and the number of survivors from it turned out to be minimal. The bow of the ship remained afloat for about twenty minutes. No action to save the ship command to take

did not make it. Together with the crew, the artists from the ensemble and the theater of the fleet, who performed with a concert on the ship, also suffered. People were on the water in a layer of fuel oil.

Sailors who knew how to swim got to the shore on their own, the rest were picked up by boats and boats.

In this situation, the commander of the destroyer division, Captain 1st Rank Fokin, who was present at the concert and was thrown from the ship by an air wave, showed extraordinary courage. Fokin ordered the boats to pick up first of all those who were wounded or unable to swim. He himself, with broken ribs and feet, refused help and, remaining on the water, helped others. He was among the last to be taken to the boat.

Losses in personnel were very heavy: 121 people died, including 109 crew members. The wounded commander Fokin was saved, and the head of the organizational instructor department of the political department of the fleet, Lobodenko, who was with him, was killed.

Landing actions

(July 14 - August 3)

Reinforced by sailors, the 325th Infantry Regiment fought behind enemy lines for three weeks, trying, like the first two landings, to cut off the road from Titovka to Zapadnaya Litsa. During this time, about 700 more volunteer sailors were landed to help him from minesweepers, boats of the Ministry of Defense and motorized boats, thousands of boxes of ammunition and tens of tons of other cargo were transported.

The factory Bolshaya Litsa changed hands several times until July 16. It was outside the range of naval artillery fire, and the landing force almost completely lost its firepower during the landing. The rangers did not set themselves the main goal of holding it, but, surpassing the paratroopers in mortars and using mountain guns, they used it to pin down the landing itself - knocking out the Red Army soldiers from there with fire support from artillery and mortars at every opportunity, as soon as part of the soldiers from the trading post were transferred to the side roads. But in general, the Germans tried not to weaken the onslaught on the 52nd division and therefore slowly backed away to the Titovskaya road.

On July 15, the day when the 58th regiment met in a head-on battle with a strike force of rangers that threatened the rear of the division, the command of the 14th Army made every effort to divert the German forces from attacking the 52nd division. In the morning, the garrison of the Sredny Peninsula began to attack. The 1st battalion of the 14th Finnish regiment was sent there. In the middle of the day, the 325th airborne regiment went on the offensive against the positions of the 4th German machine-gun battalion, located north of the trading post. The enemy had to hurriedly pull up first the rear units of the 2nd mountain division, and then the second battalion of the 14th Finnish regiment.

However, the expected withdrawal of the mountain battalions from the front never happened. Therefore, on July 16, about 700 more volunteer sailors were landed to reinforce the landing in Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, after which the paratroopers almost came close to the Titovskaya road, but they could not cut it. To eliminate the threat of a breakthrough, the rangers had to bring into battle the reserve battalion of the northern group.

On the right flank of the landing, which moved closest to the Titovskaya road, the battalion clashed with the sailors of the 1st volunteer detachment of the Northern Fleet. Stubborn fighting continued all day until evening. The rangers were unable to push back the paratroopers, but the sailors were also unable to advance further. On July 17, both sides went on the defensive, and the Germans still had to start withdrawing combat units from the front, which was quite sensitive for the rangers, given their manner of advancing in one-echelon order and dangerously stretching the front due to the abundance of not always necessary detour maneuvers.

The 136th Mountain Guard Regiment was sent to fight the landing. On July 18, he struck at the same right flank. The difficult terrain, replete with convenient defensive positions, still did not allow the chasseurs to succeed by frontal attacks, and they undertook their favorite detour. The sailors covering the flank stretched their positions to the limit.

Marines on the deck of a small hunter.

Each hill was defended by a platoon or even a squad. And each such position fought off about a company of rangers. The whole day of July 18 passed in an endless number of local battles for the heights, long and stubborn, similar to the one that the squad of senior sergeant Kislyakov withstood.

Having only one 76-mm gun and several mortars, the landing force could not resist the onslaught of the enemy, who actively used mountain guns and mortars. Naval artillery, even from the nearest Motovsky Bay, did not reach the battlefield. The artillery of the 52nd division, in the interests of the landing force, periodically conducted harassing fire on the areas, which was ineffective in the conditions of very rugged terrain and a large number of boulders. At night, the paratroopers began a slow retreat to the shore of the bay. The next day, the sailors again entrenched themselves in advantageous areas and again repelled enemy attacks until evening. The intensity of hostilities noticeably weakened. Over the next two weeks, the chasseurs of the 136th regiment slowly, trying to avoid unnecessary losses, step by step and height by height, squeezed the right flank to the landing site. The left flank of the landing, on which one of the battalions of the 325th SP was located, and then the main forces of the landing, were also forced to begin the reverse movement.

By the beginning of August, the chasseurs had regrouped, the 136th regiment left the right flank, on which it was replaced by the Finns and auxiliary units, and

moved to the left. On August 2, he suddenly went on the offensive on the left flank of the landing, as indicated in the reports of the commander of the 325th joint venture, Shakito, first with "large forces", and later, after "clarifying" the situation, with "5th battalions" at all.

The 325th regiment could not withstand the onslaught of the enemy for even half a day and began a hasty retreat, which quite strongly resembled a flight. To save the situation, the 149th separate naval company was transferred, which arrived on July 16 among reinforcements in the 1st volunteer detachment. The sailors were able to somewhat hold back the onslaught of the Germans and made it possible for the Red Army to retreat to the landing site. The sailors gradually retreated after the landing. During their withdrawal, the Red Navy Ivan Sivko was surrounded by rangers. Having used up ammunition, the sailor blew himself up with the last grenade. January 17, 1942 he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The Germans did not dare to immediately follow the sailors to come close to the shore, fearing to fall under fire from the Smerch and Thunderstorm patrol boats located near the shore.

The equipment of the paratroopers.

Thanks to this, at night it was possible to organize the evacuation of the landing force to the eastern coast of Zapadnaya Litsa Bay. But the huntsmen for the sake of such an occasion abandoned the night

rest and risked entering the range of naval artillery, since nothing larger than a guard was sent to the evacuation area by the command of the OVR.

The troops were filmed by motorboats, sea hunters and the same "Smerch" and "Thunderstorm" covering them. The distance to the eastern shore of the bay was rather small, but the transfer of almost 2,000 people took more than 6 hours from small boats.

All this time, a detached barrier consisting of 30 sailors of a separate company under the command of political instructor Ulyanov, having taken a position that was advantageous and less vulnerable to artillery and mortar fire, successfully held back the rangers with concentrated fire from the heavy and light machine guns left to him. The large rocks, from under the peaks of which the sailors acted, did not give the rangers the opportunity to suppress the sailors with shells and mines, and machine-gun fire did not let them get close.

Having failed to do anything with the barrier, the huntsmen eventually called in aircraft. The Yu-88s that arrived in the middle of the night and the Me-110s guarding them began to recklessly storm the motorized boats, but time had already been lost. The landing force was already almost all transported to the eastern shore. Only a cover group remained on the shore. The motorboats were carrying the last batch of paratroopers at that moment and were heavily overloaded. Sea hunters and watchmen opened cut-off fire at the maximum rate, so that the paint caught fire on the gun barrels and they had to be watered. As a result, the Germans drowned only one motorboat and, after two vehicles (Yu-88 and Me-110) with damage left the battle, out of harm's way, they switched to attack the Ulyanov group, which was loading at that time on the motorboat.

Because of the difficulties in equipping, cartridge belts sometimes had to be used as bandoliers. Unfortunately, it was not always possible to fill them completely.

The motorboat left the group on the shore and headed light at maximum speed towards the main forces. The Germans, who had already used up almost all the ammunition, left him alone and stormed the group of Ulyanov, who died during this raid. Left without a commander and without the support of the landing ships, which held off the eastern shore of the bay, the group was dispersed by the attack of the rangers. Some of the sailors began to retreat into the rocks, along which they reached Lopatkin Bay, where they were filmed by a motorboat, and some on rafts built from barrels, boards and logs,

began to cross the bay by swimming to the eastern shore. Soldiers and sailors sailed there from a sunken motorboat, whom no one removed from the water under fire. Three paratroopers from the cover group — Yegorov, Chubukov and Lenkov, as well as five fighters from the sunken motorboat — Kolevatov, Zinovsky and three more, whose names remained unknown ... On the eastern coast of Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, the landing party left by the evening of August 3 to the defense section of the 112th joint venture, direct contact with which was established by the boatswain Momatenko and Lieutenant Malkhanov, who had tracked him down a few days ago.

The 1st Volunteer Detachment of Sailors and the 325th SP operated in the German rear longer than all the landings landed by the Northern Fleet in the summer of 1941. The tasks assigned to him by the landing party were only partially solved. The paratroopers were never able to cut the road to Titovka, along which the mountain divisions advancing on the Litsa bridgehead were supplied. This was largely due to the desire of the commander of the landing force, Major Shakito, at all costs to retain the Bolshaya Litsa trading post, which had no strategic importance. As a result, for two days, the landing did not fetter the Germans, but the Germans fettered it, forcing them to spend their strength on more and more attempts to keep the ill-fated trading post behind them.

Removal of the landing (from the painting by K. Dorokhov "To the native shores").

A quick and decisive blow with all forces in the direction of the road could have caused the Germans much more trouble than they had as a result. But nevertheless, the landing chained a significant German force to itself for three weeks and, if it did not serve as a reason for stopping the German offensive, then at least it was a sufficient guarantee that it would not be resumed in the near future.

In addition, as shown by intelligence information, subsequently confirmed by data from German archives and the memories of German combatants, the landing prevented the implementation of the original plan of the offensive operation in full. The corps was going to operate with specially created two offensive groups, the main of which was the northern one, which included 8 battalions. The southern group was auxiliary and had only 3 battalions. Largely due to the actions of the landing force, the offensive of the northern group did not achieve its intended goals.

Having introduced the reserve battalion of the northern group into battle against the landing force, the Germans did not take, as envisaged by the offensive plan, height 322.0, and before reaching this point, they did not risk inflicting a flank attack by the southern group, which, given its relative weakness, was supposed to move into offensive only after taking this height. As a result, the southern group did not take part in the offensive, all the time remaining in their original positions.

The losses suffered by the landing force are still unclear. Major Shakito filed various reports in this regard. Of the almost 900 sailors who took part in the landing, after its completion, two incomplete companies remained in the ranks.

The country's leadership highly appreciated the merits of the paratroopers. And although the actions of the landing force were not included in the reports of the Sovinformburo, its merits were recognized at the highest level. On August 14, 1941, Moscow radio reported that the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated August 13, 1941 on awarding a large group of sailors, including the Northern Fleet, was published in the central newspapers. For courage and courage shown during the landing of the first amphibious assaults, 14 commanders, commissars and political instructors of MO boats, minesweepers, patrol ships, as well as senior officers of the Northern Fleet, including Golovko, Nikolaev and Platonov, were awarded the Orders of the Red Banner and the Red Star .

Counterattacks and counterattacks

(July 18 - [August])

Despite the fact that the Germans quite easily repulsed the attacks undertaken on July 16 in the interests of the landing force, the division command still hoped to push the rangers behind Bolshaya Litsa. And on July 18, all regiments of the division resumed attacks again, but achieved nothing. The enemy blocked their path with concentrated fire. It became clear that the units had reached the front line of a tough defense.

In order to organize a new, more effective offensive, it was necessary to bring up artillery, arrange supplies, and for this it was necessary to complete the construction of the road. It took at least ten days to prepare.

When the headquarters was already completing the drafting of the order on the transition of the division to the defense, the head of the intelligence department of the army headquarters arrived at the division. He began to convince Veshchezersky that the Germans were withdrawing, and at the same time referred to the reports of the pilots, who allegedly observed columns of cars leaving to the west in the rear of the mountain corps for two days in a row. Veshchezersky argued in vain that the division's reconnaissance data, based on continuous observation of the enemy, did not allow such a conclusion to be drawn. The head of the intelligence department expressed the point of view of the army command.

Almost simultaneously with his arrival, an order came from Murmansk stating that "the enemy is retreating", and instructed to attack vigorously so as not to break away from him.

It was difficult to break away from the rangers who went on the defensive, but once again running into a tough defense was very easy. Veshchezersky had to report his thoughts to the commander. After listening to him, Frolov replied:

"It is still necessary to advance in order to facilitate the operations of the airborne regiment. He has had success. Frequent attacks are needed, if possible, daily.

At the same time, the army commander agreed to the proposal to start a general offensive and when the artillery was brought up.

As a result, daily attacks by individual battalions and companies began in turn in all regiments. There was no time left for engineering equipment positions. The attacks were in the nature of reconnaissance in force and continued until the end of July. In the course of constant, although not very intense attacks, the units suffered losses, but did not achieve success.

The sappers, somewhat reinforced by the infantry, finally completed the laying of the road, which turned out to be so narrow that two cars could not pass. On difficult slopes, especially after rains, trucks were lifted only with the help of a tractor. The enemy spotted two such passes and fired from the guns at the vehicles waiting for the tractor. I had to urgently put vertical protective masks here. Support poles for them were delivered by dragging on horseback for thirty kilometers. Dangerous sections of the road were urgently widened so that cars could move in both directions without delay.

In mid-July, the headquarters of the 14th Infantry Division and its 143rd Artillery Regiment, taken from the coast, arrived at Litsa. Major General Nikishin was appointed commander of the division. Considering that the Germans were still advancing close to the coast, the secondary left flank of the defense sector was assigned to the division, reassigning the 95th rifle regiment to it. However, intelligence data obtained during the battles of July 12-16 did not give much hope in this regard. The southern offensive grouping was not brought into action only because of the actions of the landing, and its use, of course, was only a matter of time needed to bring the most battered northern offensive grouping to its senses.

At this time, the 52nd division received a small replenishment and was able to bring the rifle companies to half of their regular strength. However, there were still not enough commanders, platoons were often commanded by sergeants.

By July 29, along the road leading to height 314.9, the artillery of the southern group of Soviet troops and the convoys of all units moved to new places. Supply immediately improved.

Considering all this, the army commander ordered a general offensive to begin on August 1.

When preparations for the offensive were being completed, a congratulatory telegram was received from the Military Council of the North-Western Direction. It noted: "The divisions of the Murmansk direction are fighting steadfastly and selflessly fulfilling their duty." The political department of the division copied the text of the telegram and sent it to all units and divisions.

Offensive operations on Zapadnaya Litsa had their own specifics associated with the difficult terrain and the lack of forces involved. The army command did not develop any general plan, but, on the contrary, approved the plan developed by the 52nd division, which was the main strike force of the planned offensive.

And the command of the division for a long time could not decide on the choice of the direction of the main attack. The direction along the southern coast of the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa bay has disappeared, since here, far along the river, up to its mouth, a mountain plateau stretched with

many small transverse ridges, skyscrapers and hollows, very advantageous for defense. A strike north along the river to cut off the protrusion of the enemy bridgehead was also not good, since the troops would have to be drawn into the narrow space between the heights flanking to the right and the same on the other side of the river, which would entail heavy losses from crossfire.

The enemy machine gunner has been destroyed.

The sector of the 58th regiment again turned out to be the most profitable.

To strike directly to the north and from here was useless - in front was the same coastal plateau, but to the left was a narrow and long mountain range. This ridge was the key to the entire German position in the bridgehead. It was only two kilometers from the river, and its gentle western slopes did not have lines suitable for defense, for which the enemy could cling after capturing the ridge.

It was decided to deliver the main blow from here to the west, attacking in the forehead and deploying for this the battle formation of the 58th regiment at a right angle to the left.

Details were clarified on the ground.

In front of the positions of the 1st battalion of Captain Sharov there was a height of 274.0, due to the shape of its peak, it was called "Sugar Loaf". There, at the best observation position of the entire sector, enemy observers and spotters were stationed.

The offensive here could only be carried out along a narrow saddle between the positions of the battalion and the "Sugar Loaf", which meant moving about 800 meters along a narrow stretch of open terrain, sandwiched between a swamp on one side and

a small lake on the other.

Fight for height.

On the site of the 3rd battalion of Captain Grinev, it was also necessary to advance along an open section of a hollow about a kilometer long, however, under the cover of fog, one could try to move the starting positions 200 meters forward.

As a result, the division command did not propose any new offensive plan, but decided to repeat the experience of previous, unsuccessful attacks, supplementing them with artillery preparation and strikes from the neighboring 205th and 112th regiments, which were slightly regrouped for this purpose.

From each regiment, two battalions were assigned for active operations, and the offensive lines were 500-600 meters, for the 112th regiment of Korotkov - along the shore of Lake Zaichik and for the 205th regiment of Shpilev - to a height of 258.3. Artillery preparation was limited to 15 minutes and was to be carried out by regimental artillery, two howitzer batteries and 5 artillery battalions. Moreover, the fire was to be fired first at the offensive sectors of Shpilev and Korotkov, and only then at the main one - Khudalov. It was planned that the 58th regiment, inflicting the main blow, would go on the offensive a little later, when the enemy forces would be diverted to repel the attacks of the 112th and 205th SPs.

In order to somehow enhance the effect of artillery preparation, it was decided to fire on the "Sugarloaf" with all the available stock of smoke shells. Four of the five artillery divisions, after the end of the artillery preparation, were to switch to counter-battery combat.

As the head of artillery of the division Kubeev immediately warned, "we don't have enough artillery for an offensive. The enemy may attack. Opposite Khudalov were seven or eight artillery batteries and one or two mortar platoons. We cannot suppress everything at once. You have to do it in two attacks.

Kubeev also rightly assumed that the scouts detected the firing positions of far from all enemy batteries. This also complicated the fight against enemy artillery, but it was believed that the rest of the batteries could be identified during the battle. On the evening before the battle, the chief of staff of army aviation called the headquarters of the 52nd division and said that he could support the regiments with one flight of a bomber squadron. The pilots suggested using aviation to suppress enemy artillery. But the command of the division could not accurately indicate by telephone even the firing positions of enemy batteries known to him, lost in

monotonous pile of stones and boulders. It was decided to strike at a height of 274.0, since the outlines of the "Sugarloaf" are so characteristic that it is not difficult to find it from the air.

Here a new problem arose. For the meager forces of the 58th regiment, every hundred meters to the enemy was vital, and the battalions of Grinev and Sharov could now advance closer to the enemy under cover of the morning fog, since, according to the requirements of the current combat manual, it was prescribed to keep the infantry from the object of aviation operations at a distance at least a kilometer.

When this issue was discussed, one of the staff commanders made a proposal: to ask the pilots to make one more approach - a false one, only with machine-gun fire. It was assumed that, in anticipation of the third bombing, the Germans would snuggle up to

the ground, and in the meantime the infantry will have time to go three hundred or four hundred meters. The army headquarters supported the idea. "Let's make a false one," promised the chief of staff of army aviation.

In general, the offensive of the 52nd division was a gamble from beginning to end, but this was yet to be seen ...

August 1 was a clear, sunny day. The starting position of Grinev's and Sharov's battalions was hidden by fog. The rays of the non-setting polar sun, shining in a cloudless sky, brightly illuminated only the ridge and the eastern slopes of the ridge occupied by the German rangers.

Artillery preparation in the areas of Korotkov and Shpilev began according to plan. Then nine SB bombers appeared in the air. The planes formed a stretched circle over Sugar Loaf, dropping bombs in turn. The command of the division did not catch the false approach, it seemed to him that, having opened machine-gun fire, most of the aircraft continued to drop bombs. When the bombers left, Colonel Veshchezersky, who had advanced his command post to a height of 314.9, was waiting for them to return for a false approach. But the planes did not return, and the division commander belatedly ordered artillery preparation on Sugar Loaf to begin. But time had already been lost and the fog began to dissipate. After the end of the Soviet artillery preparation, German artillery and mortars fell upon Khudalov's battalions, which went on the attack. The artillery of the division entered into a counter-battery fight.

The regiments of Korotkov and Shpilev launched an attack simultaneously with the appearance of bombers over the battlefield. But, knowing the general plan of the operation, their commanders did not particularly speed up the offensive, their reports on the radio are full of phrases like: "The companies continue to move", "The last meters are crawling", "Getting ready to cut the wire", "Now they are going on the attack". There was not a single report of any success achieved, as well as reports of stubborn resistance and losses incurred.

Khudalov's battalions, on the other hand, continued to move towards the heights under heavy fire and mostly crawled. Only an hour after the artillery preparation, scattered groups of soldiers of the regiment crawled and in short dashes approached the front line of the Germans. The huntsmen sat down on a high rocky cliff, which ran almost along the entire ridge of the height. In small groups of fighters, consisting of 4-5 people, hand grenades flew from above.

From below, grenades were thrown much less frequently. Nevertheless, individual trenches on the ridge were sometimes captured, but the rangers either destroyed those who broke through or threw them back. Periodically, shells and mines exploded on the ridge, but massive fire was not carried out along the height, since the divisions were busy with counter-battery combat.

The companies suffered losses, but they could not break into the crest of the height and gain a foothold there. Khudalov, with the permission of Veshchezersky, reinforced the left flank with a company from the second-echelon battalion, which occupied the former front line of the regiment's defense. It didn't change the situation. Both battalions reported increasing losses.

When shells and mines began to run out, Veshchezersky gave the order to stop the offensive, but continue to hold the achieved line. The situation in the auxiliary areas was no better, although they did not suffer heavy losses there.

The commander of the 112th regiment, Korotkov, in response to the question of what lines the infantry had reached, reported that staff commanders had been sent to the companies, who

be sure to raise the fighters on the attack. By evening, one skyscraper on the front line of the enemy in his area was captured.

The commander of the 205th regiment, Major Shpilev, did not get in touch at all: his chief of staff reported that one of the battalions had buried himself in a wire fence and was digging in, and the regiment commander on the spot was looking at what could be sent as reinforcements ...

The army command reacted to the failure of the offensive unexpectedly calmly. General Frolov allowed to stop the offensive and even withdraw the 3rd battalion of the 58th regiment, which was subjected to continuous shelling not only from the front, but also from the flank, from the coastal plateau.

The failure of the offensive was quite natural. To storm such a well-fortified height with a convenient terrain for defense, like Sugar Loaf, the division did not have enough people or artillery.

The Germans, on the other hand, had the strength not only to repulse the attacks of the division, but also to begin pressure on the landing regiment located to the north of the division, which on the morning of August 2 was forced to begin a retreat to the bay in order to board the ships.

To help the paratroopers, the division, on the orders of the commander, supported the paratroopers for two days with fire on the squares and attacks in their direction. The landing regiment, attacked, according to the reports of its commander, by five battalions of the enemy, in the end still did not hold its positions and on August 3 crossed to the shore of the Zapadnaya Litsa Bay, where it was reassigned directly to the 52nd division, along with the 1st volunteer detachment of sailors of the Northern Fleet.

From the fighting in early August, the army command and the command of the 52nd division drew the appropriate conclusions. By this time, the German command had exhausted its forces and was unable to make a breakthrough in the Murmansk direction. The well-prepared and well-armed jaeger corps, not receiving reinforcements after two July offensives, could no longer break through the defenses of the 52nd division. But the division, which had lost a significant part of the pre-war personnel, was not able to push the Germans back from their positions. Parts of the 14th division and landing units of the Northern Fleet could be used

for support activities only. An unstable balance was established at the front.

respite

(August 3-17)

After the August battles, the rifle companies of the 52nd division were greatly thinned. The subordination of the airborne regiment division did not improve the situation, since the area defended by the division increased due to the eastern coast of the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa bay.

The landing regiment immediately took up defense in the area of the bays of Nerpichya and Lopatkin. From the side of the Motovsky Bay, it was supported by the ships of the Northern Fleet. The division stretched out for twenty-five kilometers in a thin thread, having no reserves, except for the reconnaissance battalion in the division and the reconnaissance companies in the regiments. The sustainability of such a defense was highly questionable and immediate reinforcements were required.

The 116th construction battalion of the Northern Fleet arrived in the division - about five hundred people with rifles and heavy machine guns (whose personnel, who had no combat experience, were partially distributed among the regiments that had thinned out most during the last battles).

In order to somehow improve the situation with the excellently trained pre-war cadres knocked out during the battles, which significantly exceeded the poorly trained and uncertainly acting replenishment, the division began to detain much more wounded in its medical battalion than allowed by the norms. However, this has already been done in many divisions. The senior combatant and medical authorities fought against an undesirable phenomenon, but the teams of convalescents in the divisions still exceeded the standard by several times.

After the unsuccessful bombing of Sugar Loaf, a permanent aviation representative from the Air Force Headquarters arrived at the division. Somewhat later, he received a radio station to communicate not only with his headquarters, but also with aircraft in the air. Weakened by the grueling July battles, the division could not carry out effective offensive operations. There was an acute need to move on to a tough defense: to consolidate positions, put the companies in order. However, the order from the army headquarters for the transition to the defense still did not arrive.

It cannot be said that the army headquarters demanded to continue the offensive, but each operational report, which did not include at least a reconnaissance search, was perceived by the authorities as a lack of initiative and activity. Perhaps this was due to the difficult situation in the Kestenga direction. The division had to constantly attack, so that the enemy would not at least not be able to transfer troops from Bolshaya Litsa to Kestenta, where intense battles unfolded.

Searches were carried out almost every night, since the sun was already setting (though so far only for two hours a day). Separate battles also took place, in particular in the sector of the 205th regiment. They were caused by the loss of the Zelenaya height, which was located in the valley, near the eastern bank of the Bolshaya Litsa.

The high-rise was occupied by a small outpost - twelve fighters. In the evening, six of them went to the rear for dinner. At this moment, the rangers suddenly attacked the height - the soldiers remaining on it retreated. The commander of the regiment, Shpilev, discouraged by such a ridiculous loss, received an order to return the Zelenaya: the positions of the enemy were clearly visible from it. But three attacks did not bring success. To avoid unnecessary sacrifices, I had to temporarily put up with the loss of altitude.

Divisional artillery and Koshelev's attached long-range battery fired at the rear of the enemy, at vehicles and large groups of soldiers, as far as the meager supply of shells allowed.

Divisional artillery fire was strictly centralized and, due to a shortage of ammunition, was opened only with the permission or order of the head of artillery of the Kubeev division. He had excellent communication not only by telephone, but also by radio, which at that time required great skill.

Artillery rarely fired at enemy batteries. It was strictly forbidden to fire at newly discovered targets. And at the same time, sometimes those positions that had already been abandoned by the German artillerymen were even fired upon. At the same time, it was pretended that their new coordinates were not known. In the event of a serious battle, it was believed that Kubeev could paralyze or weaken the fire

enemy artillery, suddenly attacking it with all the might of their DIVISIONS.

Anti-aircraft battery in the Arctic.

The reconnaissance of the positions of enemy artillery and mortars was intensively carried out. Finding a mortar in the Arctic is very difficult. It is impossible to detect it by the sound of a shot, since a mortar shot differs little from a rifle shot: a little louder, a little jerky and a little lower in tone - that's all. It can be heard only if the wind blows towards the observer and there is no firing at the forefront. It is possible to set the direction to the firing position by ear only approximately, because the sound of the shot is distorted by the mountain echo. Even on the plain, a mortar only needs a slight fold in the terrain to become invisible, and even more so among rocks and stones. It is almost impossible to detect it by direct frontal observation. Only sometimes a mortar battery, located behind a ridge of stones, in clear calm weather gives itself away.

vertical streams of heated air that appear above it during frequent firing.

To detect mortar positions, observation was organized from flank points, especially where the front protruded into the enemy defenses. The maps showed all possible places where enemy mortars could be located. They were closely monitored. Artillery scouts were divided into groups, and each of them had several observation posts. Such groups were called nomads. The results of their observation were supplemented by data from infantry reconnaissance and snipers, and a survey of prisoners.

In order to maintain freedom of maneuver with the wheels, each battery built three firing positions. They built housing, shelters for horses and tractors, paved access roads. For the purpose of camouflage, they fired only from temporary positions. However, there was no training in timely change of firing positions, although it was already well known from the experience of the July battles that the huntsmen prefer to infiltrate the rear and strike precisely at the positions of the artillery. Subsequently, this continued to lead to unnecessary casualties and the capture of guns by the enemy.

Anti-aircraft batteries had four firing positions, but changed them after each firing. Therefore, with the breakthroughs of the Germans that followed in the near future, they did not suffer losses. During a major raid on Murmansk on 10 August, the anti-aircraft gunners of the division shot down a Yu-88. According to the documents found on the pilots, it turned out that they had recently been transferred from France, which was generally typical: the fired crews, who had experience of the war in the Arctic, were extremely difficult to shoot down.

Scouts and dive bombers of the enemy practically did not go astray, it was not often possible to simply damage them. But with the "crutch" anti-aircraft gunners could not do anything at all. He often flew for hours over Soviet positions, and the anti-aircraft gunners could not bring him down. The pilot skillfully evaded the shelling, changing the course and altitude of the flight, and then called the bombers, who brought down their cargo on the most vulnerable places. Most of all got to the only bridge across the mountain river Ura. German dive bombers kept destroying it. And this bridge was very necessary. The river was not deep and not very wide, but it was impossible to cross or ford it: the bottom was strewn with stones.

At first, only a machine-gun platoon was allocated to fight the dive bombers, but he,

Naturally, he could not secure the bridge from air strikes. I had to send a platoon of small-caliber anti-aircraft guns for several days. This was more reliable, but weakened the air defense of the main positions. In addition to the bridge, two 76-mm guns of the cannon artillery regiment were put up as anti-aircraft guns. Their design allowed for a large elevation angle and firing at air targets. After that, enemy aircraft began to operate from high altitudes and therefore less accurately.

However, there was still not enough anti-aircraft artillery, and an underwater method of organizing the crossing was used to complicate the actions of enemy aircraft. A dam was built of stones with a log flooring, somewhat not brought to the surface of the water. Freely flowing water hid the bridge from view from

air. And in order to divert the attention of the German pilots, downstream they built a false bridge from boards and brought entrances to it from the main road. On August 13, after the division received reinforcements, an order was received from the army headquarters to conduct reconnaissance in force.

Officers in the Arctic, perhaps more often than anywhere else, had to take part in close combat. In addition to personal weapons, this lieutenant also carries a grenade.

Unlike the Germans, who usually attacked in the Arctic in one or two narrow areas, the 52nd division was going to attack in many directions at once in order to obtain intelligence along the entire divisional zone. The regimental commanders themselves determined these directions, the division headquarters only indicated that each of them delivers two blows: one with the forces of the battalion, the other with the forces of the company. The paratroopers also received a section along the Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay.

Since there were still not enough shells and mines in the division, it was decided to act without artillery preparation. The gunners were later to support the infantry in the occupied areas or else provide a retreat.

The attack was carried out at night to take advantage of three hours of darkness and three hours of morning mist. The night was moonlit and quiet. The recruits sent to the division, out of inexperience, showed themselves early in all areas. The Germans easily repulsed all attacks, with the exception of an auxiliary strike from a company of the 205th regiment.

By order of the commander of the regiment, Major Shpilev, the battalion commander Gulitsky, the battalion's chief of staff Bozek and the political instructor of the Bykov company developed a plan to capture the Zelenaya height, which was not of great importance, but nevertheless repeatedly passed from hand to hand. To capture the height, a small group of 16 volunteers was created, headed by political instructor Bykov. Only the political instructor himself and machine gunner Nikitin had combat experience.

The capture of Zelena is an example of a battle for low altitude typical of the Arctic, and therefore it is worth talking about it in more detail. In the Arctic, it was difficult to tear off trenches - they were hollowed out for a long time in rocky soil with crowbars, where the soil allowed it, and it was all the more impossible to make trenches. Therefore, the defense lines mainly passed along the hills and heights, large and

small. Large heights were held by fairly significant forces. Often up to a battalion, small ones - in platoons and even squads. At the same time, a platoon that took a position at a height could hold back enemy attacks and companies. Therefore, the significance of low altitudes was also quite large - not being large defense nodes and being replaced in case of their loss, they chained a lot of forces to themselves

the enemy, and it was much more difficult to take each such high-rise than an equal section of trenches on flat terrain equal to it in the number of defenders.

With the beginning of the assault, a smoke screen was placed to the right of the height. The huntsmen, seated at the top of the height, enthusiastically opened rapid machine-gun fire towards the smoke screen. In the meantime, the fighters of the assault group, imperceptibly crept up close to Zelena in the bushes and attacked it from two directions at once. But the stones reliably sheltered the rangers from bullets. Then hand grenades were used. They were thrown by Bykov and Nikitin. The rest of the soldiers did not yet know how to effectively use "pocket artillery" and handed them their grenades. There were few Germans at the height - as it turned out after its capture, there was a correction post of the 111th artillery regiment of the 2nd mountain division on it. For a while, grenades flew in both directions, but the Germans, well-armed for long-range combat and, in general, missed the attack on the heights, could not fight back like that for a long time. The spotters had two 50-mm mortars and three light machine guns, but they did not have a large number of grenades. After some time, the grenades began to run out, the lieutenant commanding the group and three soldiers were killed. The rest of the huntsmen hurriedly retreated from the height, leaving a stereo tube, a walkie-talkie, both mortars and machine guns on it.

After the departure of the spotters, one of the batteries of the German artillery regiment immediately opened fire on the height. The assault group retreated over the height, and the Germans launched a counterattack. Now the Soviet mortars and artillery of the 205th regiment opened fire. The pace of the counterattack was broken. When the German artillery ceased fire, the assault group returned to the height, a platoon from regimental intelligence was sent to help it. The battle took on a fierce character. The group was again rescued by the machine gunner Nikitin, who fired alternately from his own and captured machine guns. However, his role did not hide from the Germans - he was later killed by a sniper shot.

This was also a feature of the war in the Arctic - snipers acted more actively than in positional battles on flat terrain, trying to knock out enemy officers and machine gunners. Only after three counterattacks did the Germans stop trying to recapture the height.

As a result of the fighting on the night of August 15, despite the fact that all counterattacks were quickly repelled by the Germans, the division command nevertheless concluded that the enemy's transition to a general offensive was still unlikely.

Nevertheless, on the evening of August 15, the army commander ordered the division to go on the defensive. Moreover, the front line of defense, except for the line along the river bank, was pushed back a hundred to two hundred meters. Fortifications were hastily built here. With great difficulty, the soldiers dug trenches, laid protective walls of stones. The rocky ground and the absence of a tree did not allow the installation of wire fences on stakes. Spirals, bush braiding and slingshots were used more. The sappers did this as the wire arrived, which also did not

enough. Only at the beginning of September, when the third German offensive had to be repulsed, the wire barriers were stretched in front of the entire front line, however, only in one row.

The 325th airborne regiment, the army command decided to reassign the 14th division, which, after the defeat on the Titovka River, still consisted of one 95th joint venture, which supported the artillery regiment with fire, and transfer to it the defense sector of the 205th joint venture of the 52nd division.

The 325th regiment during the landing lost a lot of machine guns, mortars and guns, and almost completely trench tools. For actions on the main line

he clearly didn't fit. The losses he suffered during the landing are still unclear. The regimental commander revised information about losses several times, as well as about the combat and numerical strength of the regiment, and on this basis he had fundamental friction with the headquarters of the 52nd division, to which he was operationally subordinate at that moment. In addition, Shakito blamed the detachment of sailors assigned to him for the failures of the landing.

As a result, the army commander returned the 325th regiment to the 14th division, leaving in the 52nd detachment of sailors, which had been greatly reduced after the battles, which was reduced to two rifle companies and included in a separate 116th battalion, part of whose personnel was replenished by the 112th th and 58th regiments. This battalion, which everyone began to call the naval one, was put on the defense of the coast instead of the departed paratroopers, and the 205th regiment was withdrawn to the reserve of the division to Lopatkin Bay. One of the battalions alternately held the defense at the Nerpichya Bay.

The Germans continued their offensive on other sectors of the Northern Front, especially on the Kestenga. For a simultaneous strike in the Litsa direction, they still did not have enough forces, but they were actively pulling them up. The command of the 14th Army, occupied with rectifying the situation near Kestenga, had difficulty finding reserves to replenish the 52nd division, which is, in essence, the only significant force of the army in the Litsa direction and the core of the entire defensive sector. On August 17, seven hundred reinforcements arrived in the division, which made it possible to slightly increase the number of rifle companies. Now not only regiments, but also battalions were given the opportunity to have second echelons. The reconnaissance battalion, which had only one rifle company in the state, received two more, after which, given the vehicles and armored vehicles it had (which, however, most often had nowhere to use), it became, in essence, a reinforced battalion and the most powerful unit of the battalion level in division.

The respite is coming to an end

(August 18 - September 7)

On August 23, 1941, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command formed the Karelian Front. It included the 14th and 7th armies. Lieutenant General Frolov was appointed commander of the front troops, and Major General Panin was appointed in his place in the 14th Army.

According to the telegram of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the following rearrangements were made:

TO THE COMMANDER OF THE KARELIAN FRONT

(THROUGH NORTHERN FRONT)

TO THE COMMANDER OF THE NORTHERN FRONT

TO THE COMMANDER OF THE NORTHWEST DIRECTION

August 23, 3.46 Moscow No. 001199

1. For the purpose of management convenience, the Northern Front is divided into two fronts: the Karelian Front and the Leningrad Front, with the Karelian Front subordinated to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

2. Appoint Lieutenant General Frolov V.A. as commander of the Karelian Front, Colonel Skvirsky as head of the front, have headquarters in Belomorsk

(Magpie).

Establish a dividing line between the Karelian and Leningrad fronts: Voskresenskoye, Radogoza, Eremina Gora, Sviritsa, Sortavala, Varkaus, all points for the Karelian front inclusive.

3. As part of the troops of the Karelian Front, have:

a) 14th army, consisting of: 14th rifle division, 52nd rifle division, 122nd rifle division, 104th division, 54th division and 88th division; 104 dads of the RGK, Directorate 42 sk, 125 and 147 IAP, 130 sb, regiments and other units and institutions that are part of the army.

Appoint Major General Panin R.I. as commander of the army, Colonel Madetsky as chief of staff. Army Headquarters - Murmansk.

Dividing line on the left: Ust-Kumka, claim. Doubles, lawsuit. lake Cupcake lake, oz. Oulu-Jarvi.

6) 7th army consisting of: 71st and 272nd rifle divisions, 3rd division of the people's militia; 155 and 197 IAP, 65 Shap and other units and institutions that are part of the army. Sharm to have in Petrozavodsk.

Army Commander - Lieutenant General Gorelenko F.D.

Chief of Staff - Major General Krutikov.

c) to subordinate the Northern Navy directly to the commander of the Karelian Front.

4. Leave the 23rd, 8th and 48th armies as part of the Leningrad Front.

STALIN

SHAPOSHNIKOV

The fighting at the front became more and more active. The 7th Army fought heavy battles with the advancing Finnish troops. In the zone of the 14th Army, the Germans tried to advance in the Kandalaksha direction. The 88th Rifle Division and the Murmansk Brigade in the Kestenga direction also continuously repelled enemy attacks.

The Germans brought in fresh forces and improved their communications. On August 30, the scouts of the 14th division took "tongue", who served in the 388th infantry regiment, which had recently arrived from Norway. Information was also received about the transfer to Petsamo from the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia of the 199th German infantry division. Air reconnaissance established that the enemy was constructing a new road to the south near the front.

However, the transfer to the front line in the Litsa direction of 8 captured French tanks of the 1st company of the 40th special tank battalion and the 9th SS regiment (which reinforced the 2nd mountain division,

concentrated opposite the 52nd SD), the intelligence of the 14th Army remained unidentified.

Starting from the twentieth of August, artillery correction posts became

notice the suspicious movement of units in the immediate rear of the enemy. The commander of the 112th joint venture, Korotkov, reported that the enemy had opened car traffic along the coastal road leading to the Bolshaya Litsa trading post. The 2nd Mountain Rifle Division was replenished almost to the state.

Considering these signs as a possible preparation for the next offensive, the army command strengthened the defense of the units as best they could, and first of all, the most combat-ready 52nd SD, located in the threatened direction.

Since the junction with the 14th division was the weakest point of defense, it was strengthened by withdrawing the 2nd battalion of Captain Soldatov from the 58th regiment to the divisional reserve and placing it at a height of 322.0 behind the junction of divisions. A through field road was also drawn to this site.

The 14th division, which covered with its seven battalions, which had a large shortage of machine guns, a wider front than the 52nd, actually shifted the concern for the defense of its right flank to the 52nd, and concentrated its reserves behind the open left flank dangerous for it.

Among the positions of the 52nd division itself, the junction between the 58th and 112th regiments turned out to be the most vulnerable. In fact, it was defended by one platoon of the 58th joint venture, reinforced with a heavy machine gun, although a deep hollow passed here, convenient for reaching the rear of the entire combat area.

However, when the division commander tried to strengthen the defense here, it turned out that there was simply nothing to do this with. As a result, instead of the envisaged "deep defense from several lines", it was possible to plan only counterattacks of the second echelons from neighboring heights and, in extreme cases, a strike by the reconnaissance battalion of the division.

At the end of August, in a hollow behind the positions of a rifle platoon, a newly arrived company of knapsack flamethrowers was deployed in two echelons. Flamethrowers, however, except for flamethrowers, had no weapons at all, and the division command, having decided that the use of flamethrowers as defensive infantry without small arms was still too much, gave them rifles - at the rate of one for four ...

Due to the lack of quad machine gun mounts, heavy machine guns had to be used as anti-aircraft guns.

The bridgehead captured by the Germans on the eastern bank of the Zapadnaya Litsa River was still threatened. Here, positions up to the very shore of Bolshaya Zapadnaya Litsa Bay were held by the 112th SP.

Each of the two battalions of the first echelon defended a hill that rose sharply above the surrounding countryside. The right height was called Coastal, and the left - Lakeside. It was striking that all companies occupied areas of the same area, although it was obvious that the danger of German attacks was different here. The open flanks of both battalions rested on the one hand on the steep coast of the bay, on the other - in Lake Zaichik. Here, too, between the heights there was a rocky hollow, very convenient for the offensive, which went beyond the heights for 2 kilometers. Nobody covered her at all.

Sometimes Soviet units in the Arctic turned out to be better armed than German ones. Rifle squad armed with automatic rifles.

As defensive measures, here, too, a counterattack was envisaged by a battalion of the second echelon, located behind and to the side at the height of Kamenistaya. thinking

the hollow was nevertheless covered by as many as two platoons and reinforced by a forty-five battery located in the depths of the hollow. The battle formations of the battalions adjoining the junction between them were also compacted. We also decided to start thinning the bush in front of the front edge.

Unjustifiably many forces of the division were also concentrated on the coast because of the traditional fear of German landings. The steep coast of Lopatkin Bay, covered by a separate 116th reinforced battalion, would not have allowed the Germans to successfully land a significant landing here, especially since the stormy weather of the late northern summer no longer allowed this to be done using boats. More convenient for landing on the terrain was the Western Litsa Bay, the coast of which was guarded by one of the battalions of the 205th regiment. But even here, due to the stormy autumn weather, an enemy landing was extremely unlikely. However, the proposal of the division command to remove at least a battalion of the 205th regiment from the shore, replacing it with a company from the 116th "sea" battalion, which was still sticking out on the coast, remained a plan - the army headquarters did not allow this to be done.

In the end, it was decided in the event of an enemy strike on the flanks of the division, all the same, to remove the battalion of the 205th regiment from the coast. In the event of an attack on the northern flank, this battalion was supposed to be used to strengthen the defense of the regiment, and in the event of an attack on the southern flank of the division, to strengthen its counterattack. In both cases, two battalions from the sector of the 112th regiment were to switch to artillery support for the regiment.

In cases where the enemy achieved success in other directions, the 205th regiment could generally be transferred to a threatened direction with the transfer of its entire sector of defense to the 116th battalion.

On the morning of September 7, Corps Commissar Zheltov, a member of the Military Council of the Front, visited the division and asked to show the front line on the ground. Having examined the line of defense, the corps commissar reacted very remarkably to what he saw.

He was not embarrassed by the fact that single trenches for shooting from the knee and prone, lined with stones, did not sufficiently protect against artillery and mortar fire. It was not embarrassing that there were no communication passages, and the dugouts almost completely protruded above the surface of the earth. It was not embarrassing that the batteries had only one ammunition load. But the barbed wire in front of the front line had an effect on the corps commissar like a red rag on a bull.

An energetic scolding followed immediately for an excessive enthusiasm for defense with a hint of defeatism. The headquarters and political department of the division could only make excuses and repent:

"...A.S. Zheltov reproached us for paying little attention to educating soldiers in an offensive spirit. Meanwhile, the operational situation may require our regiments to go on the offensive at any moment in order to pin down the enemy's forces and deprive him of the opportunity to transfer his troops to other fronts. Therefore, even being on the defensive, it is necessary to maintain an offensive spirit and teach the troops to move forward. Being carried away by defense, we missed it."

3rd German offensive

(September 8-9)

Before the departure of the member of the Military Council, the commander of the 52nd division, Colonel Veshchezersky, managed to inform him that "in the next few days it will still be quiet for us."

And the next day, September 8, at six o'clock in the morning at the command post of the division, they heard the dull rumble of mortar and artillery bursts from the 112th Infantry Regiment. The commander of the regiment, Major Korotkov, called to the phone, optimistically suggested that the shelling was caused by the search for scouts carried out in his area. Communication with the battalions of the 112th regiment was already broken, so the regiment commander could only operate with assumptions until the situation was clarified.

The situation cleared up slowly. As was almost always the case during a prepared defense, the first information came from gunners who had well-camouflaged outposts with reliable communications.

Kubeev reported that the enemy opened heavy fire on the heights of Coastal and Lakeside, on the hollow between them, and also on the front line of the 58th regiment. Artillery preparation lasted more than an hour. Then, hiding behind a thick fog, reinforced by a smoke screen, the German infantry moved. The attack on Priozernaya was repulsed, but the northern slope adjacent to the hollow was occupied by rangers. Part of the hollow itself turned out to be occupied: the Germans approached the positions of both platoons, failing, however, to suppress the forty-five. The rangers who got close to the trenches tried to throw grenades at them, but because of their small number they were not successful. Divisional artillery opened fire on the front of the hollow, where the rangers broke through.

Anti-tank guns in the conditions of the Arctic were a valuable fire weapon, but they were difficult to mask and cover.

On the site of the 58th regiment, it was still calm. There the enemy fired infrequently.

In the zone of the 14th division, the Germans crossed the weakly covered river south of the blown up bridge. The rangers had to walk about a kilometer to the Mishukovskaya road, but they attacked sluggishly, and they were stopped.

The 112th regiment continued to suffer heavy losses. The battalion commander Senior Lieutenant Filippov was wounded on the eastern slopes of Pribrezhnaya and taken out of the battlefield. Before being sent to the rear, Filippov telephoned the regiment commander that the remaining handful of his fighters would not stand up to the occasion. Shortly thereafter, the remnants of the battalion began to withdraw.

Korotkov asked permission from the division commander to counterattack with a second-echelon battalion. He hoped to restore the situation on the Coastal. But permission was not received, since at that moment German artillery and mortars began shelling Priozernaya. By order of the division commander, the artillery battalions switched to counter-battery combat, and the counterattack was postponed until it was possible to receive artillery support. The fog cleared and visibility improved.

And again, as was the case in August, the division's artillery was unable to suppress the enemy's firepower, even with concentrated fire. The German guns temporarily ceased fire, but the enemy mortars continued to work in whole groups.

The German infantry, supported by mortars, launched an attack on Priozernaya. The battalion stationed there also began to retreat. At the same time, tanks suddenly appeared in the hollow located between Coastal and Lakeside. These were the light French Hotchkiss H-35s of the 1st company of the 40th Special Forces Tank Battalion, Major von Burstin. The company was equipped only with these machines captured in Norway.

Such captured French tanks captured in Norway were used by the Germans on Zapadnaya Litsa on September 8, 1941.

How many there were, it was not possible to establish exactly. From the observation post of the division, six vehicles were seen trying to cross a small hillock. But they never managed to master the slippery rise after the rains. By order of the head of artillery of the Kubeev division, the heavy division of the howitzer regiment, having stopped the counter-battery fight, opened barrage fire on the hillock. Two tanks were damaged, the rest retreated.

The transfer of tanks to Zapadnaya Litsa was not detected in a timely manner by the reconnaissance of the 14th Army, but it did not come as a particular surprise to its command: "The 211th separate tank battalion and the 40th enemy armored battalion" were installed back in July and August, they acted on the neighboring Kandalaksha direction, in connection with which, in early August, the army was additionally reinforced with 30 tanks.

After repulsing the suddenly launched tank attack, it became clear that the 112th regiment was hopelessly late with the counterattack. At least two battalions of rangers managed to concentrate on Coastal.

The connection between the command of the division and the 112th regiment with units on the right flank was again disrupted to such an extent that it again became unclear what had already been captured by the enemy and what had not yet been captured. Coastal height was firmly occupied by rangers, a stubborn battle continued on Priozernaya - the battalion that had begun the retreat managed to catch on to its reverse slopes and fought back from the Germans. The huntsmen fought a protracted close fight with him, but they could not drop him from a height even with the help (as it turned out later) of the approaching battalion of the 9th SS regiment, which reinforced the 2nd mountain division.

The remaining units of the 112th regiment were grouped at the height of Kamenistaya around his reserve battalion. What happens in front of the height, the command of the regiment was
don't clear.

In off-road conditions, the huntsmen had light artillery, moving on horse-drawn traction and in vyuks. The ranger's mountain cannon changes position.

Height 173.7, which was located beyond the Coastal Hill, was not occupied in a timely manner due to a lack of forces. Now, after it became clear that the enemy was inflicting a powerful blow on the right flank of the division, forces were finally found to occupy it. By order of the division commander, a company from the reserve battalion of the 112th regiment and a company from the reconnaissance battalion of the division were sent to her.

By noon, it became clear that this measure was too late: the height and terrain to the west of it was already occupied by German infantry. The situation was somewhat facilitated by rainy weather: German aircraft did not fly due to poor visibility. The artillery of the 2nd mountain division, which changed its positions in connection with the advance, also stopped firing and did not resume it throughout the day. However, taking

height 173.7, the Germans decided to arrange a local blitzkrieg and, not having had time to concentrate in sufficient quantities, continued to advance towards Kamenistaya. Just 200 meters from the height, they collided with a reserve company, which not only overturned them, but also knocked them down from the occupied height.

After that, Veshchezersky transferred another company of the reserve battalion to the occupied height, and the last was replaced by the battalion of the 205th regiment guarding the coast. The situation in the sector of the 112th regiment gradually began to stabilize towards evening. The Germans no longer made new attacks, since they could not completely capture Priozernaya - the remnants of the battalion still held on to its eastern slopes. On the site of the 14th Infantry Division, the Germans were driven back across the river. In the bag of the killed German lieutenant, an extremely sketchy pencil sketch was found, without the names of landmarks and units of the troops, but on it was a diagram of the encirclement plan for both divisions with the closing of the encirclement ring at height 322.0.

Whether such a plan actually existed, whether it related to the past German offensive or to the one that had just begun, whether it was just a lieutenant's tactical fantasy - all this, of course, remained at that time not clear. But to the south of the left flank of the 14th division, the Germans really already carried out a deep envelopment by the forces of the 3rd mountain division, where they encountered

with outposts of the 181st battalion of border guards. The reserves of the 14th division started a battle with the enemy, who, according to the division command, was advancing with forces of up to two regiments.

This partly explained the laying of the road by the Germans in a southerly direction.

The night passed relatively calmly, which allowed the divisions to regroup. The Germans did not try to conduct a night offensive, but, on the contrary, they fired rockets all the time and fired intensively from machine guns when they imagined looking for scouts.

Under the cover of darkness, the remnants of the battalion of the 112th regiment were withdrawn from Priozernaya, which did not give up the eastern slopes of the height. The positions of the battalion were occupied by a platoon of scouts, "noisy" until the morning, so that the enemy would not detect the withdrawal of the battalion from a height.

At an altitude of 173.7, the companies of the reserve battalion of the 112th regiment, in anticipation of the next German strike, were replaced by two more combat-trained companies of sailors of the 116th separate battalion (the former 1st volunteer detachment of the Northern Fleet), who already had considerable experience in holding such heights.

On the morning of September 9, the Germans resumed their attacks on the sector of the 112th Regiment, now concentrating their efforts on Hill 173.7. Despite the measures taken, the strike of the rangers still turned out to be sudden. Morning mist was still hovering over the stony hills, when two companies of sailors occupying the high ground were unexpectedly attacked by rangers and pushed back to the east. Having recovered from the sudden blow, the sailors corrected the situation by quickly launching a counterattack, which in turn turned out to be unexpected for the Germans, and again took up the height. But it was impossible to keep the height, which, as it turned out later, in the direction of the main attack of the enemy, with two companies of sailors. Under the blows of the reinforced battalion of rangers, which had pulled itself up to the height, the sailors were forced to retreat to its foot.

From a height of 173.7, the rangers attacked the positions of the 158th artillery regiment, and first of all the fourth battery, located next to Kamenista. By order of the commander

the regiment of Major Yuzov, the battery was put on direct fire.

During the battle, a turning point came. The Germans were close to breaking through the right flank of the 52nd division, and the division commander, Colonel Veshchezersky, after 15 minutes of hesitation, gave the order to bring the 205th SP into battle.

The weather improved somewhat, and at noon about 20 L-87s appeared, accompanied by fighters. The first bombing strike was delivered on Kamenistaya, the second - on artillery positions. Then artillery shelling of Kamenistaya began, and enemy mortars hit the eastern slopes of Priozernaya, although there was no one on it anymore. Apparently, the night "noise" raised by the scouts continued to mislead the rangers.

The artillery preparation of the Germans lasted about 20 minutes. The German infantry attack that followed on Kamenistaya from the north was fairly easily repulsed. From the side of height 173.7, west of the 4th battery, the Germans attacked the battalions of the 205th regiment. With the support of artillery, the regiment threw the rangers back to the line of heights, and then their advance stalled.

The sailors are on the defensive.

Having a large number of machine guns, the huntsmen fired the strongest. The attack of the 205th regiment was repulsed, and the second one, carried out after artillery preparation, was also repulsed. Having not achieved success, the regiment began to gain a foothold on the occupied line. A lively firefight in the sectors of the 112th and 205th regiments continued until the evening, but neither side made any more attempts to attack. Taking advantage of the improved weather, the Germans carried out three air raids on the positions of the 158th artillery regiment, during which, according to Soviet data, one vehicle was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery fire, and two by cover fighters.

During the battle, a moment of relative balance arose. The counterattack of the 205th regiment was unable to push back the German strike force, but stopped its advance. The continuous front of the division's defense was again restored, however, now at the turn of heights 173.7 and Kamenistaya.

In the sector of the 14th division, the Germans clearly did not have enough strength to implement plans for the encirclement, if they really had such. But it is quite possible that the blow on the left flank of the 14th division was originally of a distracting nature. The German units operating there were bombed by our aircraft to weaken their attacks. At the same time, in addition to bombs, self-igniting Liquid was actively used.

The command post of the 52nd division, located among the artillery positions of the 158th regiment between the heights and therefore subjected to constant shelling and bombing, was relocated further to the rear, on the southern shore of Lake Descent. The losses of the Germans, confirmed by the found soldiers' books, amounted to about 200 people. The huntsmen and SS men suffered the greatest losses in the sector of the 158th artillery regiment, where they came under fire from howitzers put on direct fire and were counterattacked by the 205th regiment. The losses of the Germans during the attack of Kamenistaya in the forehead, oddly enough, turned out to be insignificant.

In two days of fighting, most of the available meager artillery ammunition was used up. The howitzers had about half of the ammunition. And anti-tank guns and mortars have even less - about a quarter. The command of the army did not have ammunition and so far nothing to help the division

couldn't.

Taking advantage of the fact that the Germans clearly did not have the strength to inflict even auxiliary

strikes in all directions, the command of the 52nd SD transferred part of the shells and mines

from the ammunition of the 58th regiment, on the site of which there have not yet been attacks, to the 112th and 205th regiments. Ammunition and replenishment were requested from the army command. The 112th Regiment, after suffering losses over two days of fighting, at night reduced the remnants of the battalions of the first echelon, which had retreated from the heights, into one consolidated battalion, which immediately received an order to attack in the morning in a northerly direction. The 205th Regiment was ordered to attack to the west.

The fact that these attacks could be the division's suicide, her command preferred not to think. It was more terrible not to conduct offensive actions. As Iosif Vissarionovich used to say, "we need to be a very brave person to decide to retreat."

All night the battalions occupied their starting positions for attacks, there was a regrouping of artillery and the transfer of ammunition. The new commander of the 14th Army, Panin, looked at the situation very optimistically and approved the plan for a suicidal offensive by the bloodless regiments that did not have artillery support.

His assessment of the position of the 52nd division, expressed by him in a telephone conversation with Veshchezersky at night, is very revealing:

- I consider your position to be stronger than that of Nikishin, the main help will be sent to him for the time being. However, you will get something. The battalion of sailors has already been sent, we will throw in some shells for howitzers.

— What do you hear about the new German division, Comrade Commander?

We don't have any new information about her. I approve of your plan. I wish you success. We will support you with aviation, and the sailors with naval artillery fire. A representative of the Northern Fleet has been sent to you to communicate with the ships.

The need to send a representative of the fleet was explained by the useless interaction with the fleet, where the situation was similar to interaction with aviation, a representative of which was already in the division.

2nd counter-offensive of Veshchezersky

(September 10-14)

The offensive of the 52nd division began late, since most of the batteries did not have time to complete the transition to new firing positions by dawn. The artillery of the ships, aimed at fighting enemy batteries and firing at rear facilities, was at first late in opening fire at the orders of the division, and the sighting was carried out slowly. This was due to the fact that the sailors' observation posts were located on the shore, close to the ships. They did not see most of the targets and were forced to fire on the squares. By evening, the corrective posts of the ships moved to the observation posts of the divisional gunners. Ship fire has become more accurate. The ship's guns now fired not only at the rear and batteries, but also at the enemy's infantry. The battalions that launched the attack immediately ran into strong resistance. The enemy infantry was actively supported by aviation. The Junkers hung almost continuously in the air and fiercely bombed the attackers. The advancing units did not have air cover - the army command could not provide it. The infantry, having no shelter other than boulders, was forced

lie down. At noon, the attacks had to be stopped. Shells and mines were running out. Their arrival was expected not earlier than by the end of the next day. Fortunately, the Germans did not dare to go on the offensive.

By evening, the battalion of sailors promised by the army commander arrived. They were commanded by Lieutenant Commander Starovoirov. The sailors were sent to the 205th regiment of Shpilev, as the second echelon, because after two days of offensive fighting, more than a battalion of fighters was simply knocked out by the enemy and the composition of the regiment was reduced by at least a third.

The thoughtless counter-offensive, which bled the division to death, provoked the resumption of powerful attacks by the Germans, who decided to take advantage of the situation and throw the right flank of the division from the heights it occupied, until reinforcements approached it and ammunition was brought up.

On September 11, German aircraft reappeared over the forward edge. Several dozen Junkers bombed Kamenistaya and artillery positions. Then, after a short artillery preparation, the rangers went on the attack. This time they took into account the experience of the unsuccessful attack carried out on September 9th. Now the hunters knew the height defense system, pulled together the forces necessary to suppress it, and their blow was exceptionally effective. The front line was quickly broken through, and the battle broke out on high. Two hours later, the hunters advanced to the observation post of the 112th regiment, and the NP of one of the artillery divisions was in a semi-encirclement.

There were enough fighters and firepower on the NP of the regiment to stop the enemy attack. The division's NP fired less intensively, and the hunters began to quickly go around it from all sides. The battalion commander Captain Pasko called fire upon himself. The divisions of the regiment opened fire on the NP area with the remnants of shells. The hunters left. During the shelling of the NP, Pasko was mortally wounded by a shell fragment.

After the Jaegers broke through, the command post of the 112th regiment was moved to the divisional one near Lake Descent. This was done already in the evening, when the battle died down and the units of the 112th regiment retained only the southern part of Kamenistaya. A group of rangers broke through to the Lopatkinskaya road. They penetrated through a hollow that runs along the eastern slopes of Stony. Fortunately, scouts who happened to be nearby quickly pushed them back.

And again, the command of the division, which actually lost the western slopes of Kamenistaya due to the thoughtless offensive undertaken on September 10, decided to restore the position and recapture the northwestern part of the height with an offensive. Early in the morning, as soon as dawn began, it was decided to attack Kamenistaya with three battalions, one from each regiment. At the same time, the defense of this direction was strengthened. At night, the battalion of the 112th regiment was transferred to the height of Ogurets, which stretched in a long ridge from north to south between Kamenistaya and Lake Descent, and two companies of scouts were placed to the right.

On the morning of September 12, bomber aircraft and ships of the Northern Fleet hit the enemy's front line on Kamenistaya. Then the artillery made a ten-minute fire attack on the front line of the enemy - there were no longer enough shells for more - and the infantry went forward.

After that, it immediately became clear that the 112th regiment had almost completely lost its ability to carry out offensive operations. His exhausted and bloodless battalions could not push the enemy a single step.

Attack.

Only a battalion of sailors managed to break into the northeastern slope of Kamenistaya, and two companies of the 58th regiment caught on its western slopes. The Germans, as often happened in such cases, opened heavy machine-gun fire. At the same time, the Junkers heavily bombed the artillery. However, they might as well not do it. The rest of the ammunition had already been used up. Separate batteries shot even part of the emergency reserve.

The attacks were so weak that the Germans launched a counterattack almost immediately. An hour and a half later, the huntsmen completely took possession of Kamenistaya. A battalion of the 112th regiment, defending the height of Ogurets, and two companies of scouts entered the battle. Seriously fearing for the left flank of this battalion, which the Germans could easily bypass and get through the gorge to our communications, Veshchezersky sent amphibious tanks and armored vehicles of the reconnaissance battalion there. However, the rangers again attacked the height of Ogurets in the forehead, as well as Kamenistaya, without using the road through the gorge. Obviously, the German intelligence, unlike the Soviet, did not miss the presence of armored vehicles.

While a fierce close battle was going on, the air situation changed dramatically. From the side of the sea, a group of aircraft of the 72nd SAP appeared from 4 I-153 fighters flying to attack under the cover of 6 I-16s, and immediately attacked the Junkers, who were under the cover of the Messerschmitts. Two "Messerschmitt" B1-109E were shot down and recorded on the accounts of junior lieutenant Plotnikov and senior sergeant Romanov.

However, the fact that the air raid on the Ogurets height was thwarted did not make the German ground attack on it less successful. Jaegers managed to break into the front line. The command of the division had nothing to fend off their blow. To deepen the defense behind Ogurets, a consolidated artillery battalion was used, temporarily formed from crews that had lost their guns during the march to Titovka on June 29. 100 gunners, who had rifles and carbines, hastily took up defensive positions behind Ogurets.

The Jaegers continued their attacks until nightfall, trying to make the most of the division's lack of reserves. By evening they had captured half

Ogurets heights, bypassed the companies of the reconnaissance battalion from the flank and already at dusk in large numbers broke into the positions of the 4th howitzer battery, which the artillerymen did not have time to pull back. The crews of the guns could not push back the rangers, as happened in the July battles, and almost completely died in hand-to-hand combat.

Before the road to Ura-Guba, the Germans had to go about two kilometers. The division had no more reserves left, and Veshchezersky finally decided that it was time to move on to a tough defense. However, before that, he decided to try to eliminate both German penetrations - in the area of the Ogurets height and the howitzer battery captured by the Germans. Since there were no forces for the intended strikes, it was decided to attack this time at night.

The 9th SS Infantry Regiment took part only in decisive attacks, immediately after them retreating to the rear. Clearing occupied positions.

The same units that the Germans had pushed back were supposed to attack - the battalion of the 112th regiment of Captain Soldatov and two companies of the reconnaissance battalion. Soldiers protested as best he could, referring to the lack of forces for the attack, but when it became clear

that the order to attack would not be canceled, refused the proposed artillery preparation (which had already been reduced from the usual 20 minutes to 5). He wanted to attack suddenly, and suggested using artillery preparation to divert attention along with distracting attacks in other areas. The division commander agreed to conduct artillery preparation elsewhere, and instead of distracting attacks, for which there were also no forces, it was decided half an hour after the start of the attack to conduct two enhanced reconnaissance searches by the reconnaissance forces of the 205th regiment.

Having reported to the army commander about the decision taken, Veshchezersky traditionally asked for reinforcements and ammunition. Major General Panin no less traditionally warned that the division would have to manage on its own for several more days, but he approved of the night counterattack and approved the general decision to go on the defensive.

Night counterattacks were a complete surprise for the rangers, and the plan proposed by Soldatov was a brilliant success. The battalion and companies of the reconnaissance battalion restored the front line along the Ogurets height, which was more convenient and advantageous for defense, and repulsed the howitzer battery, capturing prisoners and dozens of soldiers' books of the killed rangers. As it turned out after the capture of the battery from the interrogation of prisoners,

battalions of the 9th SS regiment took part in the decisive blows, but after them they were immediately withdrawn back, without stopping at the forefront.

After the unexpected success of the night counterattacks, the Germans did not take active action in the sector of the 52nd division for two days. And on September 13, there was a lull in the entire Litsa section of the Karelian Front.

Height 314.9

(September 14-18)

On the evening of September 14, the Germans unexpectedly launched offensive operations in the sector of the 14th division and delivered a quick blow from the south to its rear, cutting off the Mishukovskaya road on the move.

All artillery and the command post of the division were forced to withdraw to the north, and its regimental carts huddled at Hill 322.0. The gunners of the 6th battery of the 143rd artillery regiment of the 14th division, in the area of the 51st kilometer of the Mishukovskaya road, unexpectedly stubbornly resisted the jaegers who had broken through. The gunners suffered heavy losses, the battery commander also died, but the Germans could not take it. The success of the Germans here forced the command of the army to accelerate the transfer to its sector of the regiments of the division of the people's militia, which was being formed in Murmansk, called the "Polar". This division was formed in such a hasty manner that prisoners were included in its composition without any problems - both those evacuated from Titovka and from other nearby camps. In the absence of army reserves and any military units (apart from rarely arriving marching battalions) that could be used as reinforcements in the Murmansk direction, the command placed high hopes on this untrained and poorly armed division. Two regiments of this division were already crossing the Kola Bay to the Litsa bridgehead, where this fresh division, according to the original plan of the army command, was supposed to support the next counteroffensive of the 52nd division. In connection with the change in the operational situation, it was decided that the division would first help rectify the situation in the sector of the 14th division, and only then support the 52nd. And until that moment, the 52nd division had, in the words of the new commander-14, Major General Panin, "somehow get out" on its own.

Correction post.

On the night of September 15, the 233rd regiment of this division, which was already advancing to the Litssky bridgehead, was immediately put into battle in the sector of the 14th division. The next day, he was supported by the 290th SP. The huntsmen were forced to stop the offensive and in some areas even moved back a little. The blow of the "Polar" division came as a complete surprise to the Germans, who considered this direction auxiliary. In the course of counterattacks carried out by the regiments of the 14th and "Polar" divisions, the rangers managed to be thrown back over the line of the Serpovidnoye-Kuyrkyavr lakes. The 138th mountain regiment, which had by the time of the counterattack in companies of 70 people, suffered heavy losses, was forced to bring into battle all the rear and headquarters units, and even lost some of the headquarters documents captured by the militias during the hasty retreat of the regiment headquarters, barely getting out of the semi-encirclement.

Meanwhile, the 52nd division was "getting out" as best it could.

Having regrouped, Major General Schlemmer's 2nd Mountain Division clung to the dominant heights, hanging over the flank of the defense of the 52nd SD. With the flank attack that suggests itself in such a situation, the 58th SP would immediately find itself in an extremely disadvantageous position. The sector of defense occupied by the regiment did not make it possible to concentrate enough forces and means necessary to parry such a blow. The 3rd battalion of the regiment was with exposed flanks at a height of 275.0 front to the west. The 1st battalion was located on the northern slopes of height 314.9 with the front to the north. Then there was a deep gorge, and behind it was a pass, on which the 2nd battalion defended, covering the column route to Ura-Guba and not having fire contact with other units. The neighbor on the right was far away. The left neighbor was closer, but in direct contact with him

also didn't exist.

In this situation, the most reasonable thing was to leave the height and align the line of defense with other units. But height 314.9 dominated the area, so it was not so easy to decide to leave it without a fight. The tactics of active defense, prescribed by the field manual of 1939, was an immutable rule of warfare, which was firmly adhered to by both the command of the 52nd division and the command of the 14th army. But the tactical counterattacks carried out in accordance with it from September 10 to 14 had already sufficiently bled the division and showed the fatality of such a practice in the current situation. However, this has not yet been clear to everyone.

On the night of September 15, the commander of the 58th joint venture, Major Khudalov, with the commissar of the regiment and the chief of staff, thought about what could be done in the current situation. The regiment, in fact, was in a fire bag.

Chief of Staff Saltykov expressed the opinion that the height should be maintained under any circumstances. Commissar Lazarev supported him, emphasizing that the personnel of the regiment were prepared for battle, and the communists and Komsomol members, all fighters as one, declare that they will fight without sparing their lives. Khudalov replied that he had no doubt that the regiment would fight to the death. And yet, after some thought, he proposed to prepare a report to the division commander about the difficult situation and the possibility of a forced withdrawal from a height to positions from where in the future it would be possible to go on the offensive and return the lost line.

The report was sent to the division headquarters at night with the regimental engineer senior lieutenant Novikov. While the command of the regiment was waiting for an answer, the enemy

on the morning of September 15, in the sector of the 3rd battalion, he went on the offensive. Before the attack, the Germans carried out a strong artillery preparation on previously targeted targets. The huntsman's offensive began in dense morning fog, under the cover of which they managed to get quite close to the positions of the battalion. The German attack was again unexpected. In dense fog, the forces of the advancing battalion commander Chernetsky were estimated at 3 battalions, which, most likely, was an exaggeration. By 11 o'clock, having not achieved success in rather cautious frontal attacks and having specified the location of the battalion, the rangers began a flank maneuver. The folds of the terrain allowed them to pass covertly.

The flamethrower company defending the "gorge" suffered significant losses. She was the first to take the hit. The jets of fire did not stop the enemy - his numerical superiority was too great. Most of the fighters were knocked out by rifle and machine-gun fire from medium distances, after the Germans figured out who they were dealing with. The few surviving flamethrowers, having somehow put up a curtain of fire, on which the remnants of the fire mixture went, managed to break away from the rangers.

Delivery of ammunition in off-road conditions.

Their further fate turned out well. The remnants of the company from the division were immediately taken away by the chief of the army, along the way reproaching its command for the misuse of flamethrowers.

Later, attacks began on the 1st battalion. And here the rangers managed to make a detour movement under the cover of fog. In some places, the huntsmen were able to wedge themselves into the orders of the battalions, bypassing the firing points. By 1 o'clock in the afternoon the fog began to dissipate, and the rangers immediately called in aircraft. Aviation and artillery of the Germans, using radio communications, established clear interaction with the advancing assault groups of rangers and set about breaking into the defenses of the battalions.

Only at 14 o'clock from the headquarters of the division did the answer come by radio to the sent report. Veshchezersky ordered to immediately organize an exit from the battle and leave the height. After weighing all the "pros" and "cons" and having secured the opinion of Lazarev, Khudalov came to the conclusion that leaving the battle in broad daylight when the enemy

half-surrounded two battalions of the regiment and in some places wedged into the depth of defense, it would be too risky.

The commander of the 1st battalion, Sharov, whose position was being attacked near the battalion of rangers, managed so far to maintain control over the course of the battle, which was becoming more and more fierce. At the junction of the two companies of the battalion, the machine gunners covering it deliberately missed a platoon of rangers from small hollows, after which the platoons from both companies transferred to the junction, using the created numerical superiority, struck at them, moving into close combat. The huntsmen were unable to repulse the sudden onslaught from both sides on the terrain that was inconvenient for this and were forced to disperse, trying to leave one by one. But at the exit from the hollow, they came under the crossfire of two machine guns, which did not allow them to retreat to the hollow, and almost all were destroyed. The position of the 3rd battalion, attacked, as it turned out, after the fog cleared, by two enemy battalions, gradually worsened. The companies of the battalion were driven back by the Germans from each other and defended one by one. The company, located on the right flank of the battalion, was in the most difficult situation. The direction of the main German attack here was determined incorrectly, and the battalion commander Chernetsky concentrated all possible forces on the left flank of the battalion, where he himself went. On the right flank, the defense was led by his deputy senior lieutenant Balasanyan. The rangers gradually reduced the distance to the battalion positions more and more. They were thrown back by a counterattack by platoons of lieutenants Balutkin and

Bogdanov. The forces of the company gradually dwindled. From the mortar platoon, which was located at the location of the company, only two people survived. Despite the losses, the company not only held the defense, but also inflicted significant damage on the rangers. Three fighters of the company managed to cut off and destroy a group of rangers of 9 people.

The 2 artillery batteries of the regiment could not provide sufficient support to the defending battalions, since they had almost no ammunition.

In the end, the rangers managed to cut through the battle formations of the company and break through to the command post. A record of the last report made by radio by Balasanyan to the regiment commander has been preserved:

X: What's the matter?

B: - The enemy is attacking the CP area, five fighters are with me, including a radio operator. We recaptured the rangers twice. They take losses. They are accumulating again, 50 meters away ... "When Khudalov asked if he could repel the attack, Balasanyan replied: "I won't go anywhere from this height, "and the connection was cut off.

Around the same time, Chernetsky reported to the regiment commander that all attacks on the left flank had been repelled, but the enemy was bringing up fresh forces. Everything was calm in the sector of the 2nd battalion, but since the battalion covered the column route to Ura-Guba, not a single soldier was taken from him. The rest of the battalions had to be withdrawn in order to avoid their complete defeat, but it was impossible to do this during the day. The battalions were so weakened that they were already holding on only due to a system of fire conducted from equipped positions.

With the onset of twilight, Khudalov called battalion commander-3 Chernetsky to the radio and openly dictated to him an order to withdraw the battalion to the reserve, indicating the area of concentration. Demanding to ensure the removal of the wounded, the regiment commander ordered to announce to all the personnel of the battalion that the exit from

the battle will be covered by fire and counterattacks of the 1st battalion, which will remain in their previous positions. The choice of ways and means of withdrawal was left to the discretion of the battalion commander himself.

At this time, Khudalov himself was called to the radio by his neighbor on the left - the commander of the 325th joint venture of the 14th division, who had become a lieutenant colonel by this time, Shakito and said that up to two battalions of rangers, bypassing the flank of his regiment, were moving in the direction of the rear of the 58th SP.

The forces of the rangers at night, most likely, were again overestimated, but the very fact of the intention of the Germans to carry out a night attack was out of the ordinary - usually the rangers themselves never made night attacks. Khudalov personally went to the 1st battalion in order to organize an effective cover for the withdrawal of the 3rd battalion in such difficult conditions and thereby try to avoid a possible defeat of the regiment. As a result, the battalion forced the rangers to get involved in a protracted battle. When parts of the battalion began an organized withdrawal before dawn, the huntsmen did not pursue them.

More offensive actions from the Germans did not follow. Insignificant fighting continued in all sectors of the Litsa bridgehead until September 19, when the Germans withdrew across the river and went over to a tough defense.

Completion of the operation

(September 19-22)

On September 19, 1941, the Soviet Information Bureau reported: "In the stubborn battles in the Murmansk direction, our units inflicted heavy losses on three SS battalions and two German mountain regiments. The 136th and 137th German mountain regiments lost about 1000 soldiers and officers killed and over two thousand wounded, which in general was not an exaggeration.

After the September offensive, the 136th, 137th and 138th regiments had 50-70 people in companies.

Both German divisions, which had been at the forefront since the end of June, actually received no reinforcements. With reinforcements, however, things were a little better. Before the last offensive, the mountain corps received the 9th SS Infantry Regiment and the 388th Infantry Regiment for reinforcement.

But due to the lack of mountain training, they could not play a significant role in the development of the operation, since all the tactics of the corps were based on typical mountain fighting techniques that required long-term special training and appropriate weapons and equipment. Unprepared infantry units were not able to take an effective part in the deep detours and attacks on difficult terrain, which were favored by rangers. They did not have the necessary amount of pack transport, as well as artillery adapted for action in the mountains. It would be more logical in such a situation to use on foot the parachute regiments, which have both the necessary weapons and the necessary training. But the German command had a different point of view on this issue ...

The lack of proper equipment led to the fact that the 388th Infantry Regiment lost all draft horses that were not accustomed to either mountain or polar

conditions. However, a similar fate later befell all the Greek mountain mules brought with them by the 6th Mountain Division, which had fought before in the warm climate of the Mediterranean.

As a result, the 388th Infantry Regiment acted sluggishly in the auxiliary direction, and the 9th SS Infantry Regiment was involved only in decisive attacks on the most important heights, after which it immediately left the front line.

As a result of the 10-day September battles, the mountain divisions finally lost their ability to carry out offensive operations. On September 19, the Germans were forced to retreat from the eastern bank of the Western Litsa to the western one in order to organize a solid defense.

On September 22, 1941, Hitler signed OKW Directive No. 36, which spoke of the temporary cessation of the offensive of the mountain corps on Murmansk:

OKB DIRECTIVE No. 36

22. 9194

Owls. secret.

For command only.

Fuhrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Operations headquarters.

National Defense Department (1st opera.),

L no. 441578/41.

D. Unaccustomed difficult terrain conditions, lack of roads and the continuous transfer of Soviet reinforcements to Karelia and Lapland - all this served as the reasons why the weak forces of the Army of Norway and the 5th Air Fleet still failed, despite enormous efforts and heroism. , to reach the Murmansk railway.

The enemy's violation of our coastal communications in the Arctic further limited the possibility of carrying out the plans of the Mountain Rifle Corps - to reach Murmansk as early as this year.

But, despite this, they still managed to pin down large enemy forces and pull them away from the main front, push the Russians everywhere over the old Finnish-Soviet border and completely eliminate the threat to Northern Finland, and above all to the nickel mines.

P. It is necessary to adhere to the ultimate goal of operations in Northern and Central Finland - the destruction of the enemy forces defending Murmansk and the Murmansk railway.

The significance of this area for the conduct of the war by Germany lies in the presence of vital nickel mines. The enemy is also well aware of the significance of this area. One should take into account the possibility that the British will base their large air formations in the areas of Murmansk and Kandalaksha, as well as use Canadian and Norwegian units in battles here and transport a large amount of military materials to Murmansk. In addition, one should take into account the possibility of air raids even in winter on nickel mines and miners' settlements. Our efforts must be proportionate to the degree of this danger.

Sh. I order:

1. Army "Norway"

a) stop the offensive in the sector of the 3rd Finnish Army Corps and bring the liberated forces of the 36th Army Corps here;

6) in the 36th Army Corps, to carry out all the necessary preparatory measures in order to resume the attack on Kandalaksha in the first half of October, with the goal of at least cutting the Murmansk railway before the onset of winter. Find out also whether the continuation of this offensive in winter will be more successful than in autumn.

The Finnish command will be asked to organize a timely transfer by rail through Rovaniemi of the 163rd division, which will come under the command of the army "Norway";

c) the attack of the mountain rifle corps on Murmansk should be stopped for the time being, continuing offensive operations on the northern flank only to the extent necessary to improve positions and mislead the enemy. It is necessary, taking into account the tasks of the navy, before the onset of winter to take possession of at least the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula and thereby exclude the possibility of firing artillery

the enemy and the actions of his torpedo boats in order to block the approaches to the port of Liinakhamari. A reconnaissance and preparation of plans for this operation should be immediately organized and the results reported as soon as possible. For the destruction of land and sea targets, the necessary special combat equipment will be allocated, which can still be brought up and used. Now it is difficult to decide whether it is possible to carry out the intention of the army - to leave two reinforced mountain rifle divisions in the Petsamo area, and the 2nd mountain rifle division in the Rovaniemi area. But this must be strived for. In the future, it is planned to replace the 3rd mountain rifle division with the 5th mountain rifle division or one of the newly formed mountain rifle divisions;

d) for the purpose of transporting supplies for the mountain rifle corps, motor transport columns will be purchased or chartered in Sweden. If these vehicles are not enough, an order will be given for the delivery of vehicles from Germany;

e) I instructed the Imperial Minister, Dr. Todt, to build a field railway from Rovaniemi to Petsamo as soon as possible, mercilessly using Russian prisoners of war for this;

f) to resume the attack on Murmansk, it is planned to deliver all the latest military equipment that can be used in the tundra.

2. Navy

The task of the fleet is to prevent the delivery of weapons and food to Murmansk in winter, especially at a time when air operations are difficult. For this purpose, it is necessary to create a temporary base for small ships, preferably in Petsamo Bay, but only on condition that the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula can be captured. If the supply to Kirkenes and Petsamo by sea is temporarily interrupted, it is necessary to try to restore it again. The coastal defenses of Petsamo Bay and the Kirkenes area must be strengthened to such an extent that they can withstand the attack of heavy ships.

3. Air force

The presence in Northern Norway of the 5th Air Fleet, which has large forces prepared for combat operations in winter conditions, is of decisive importance. The forces of this fleet should be used in such a way that, before the period of bad weather, the planned further conduct of the operation in the Kandalaksha area and the actions to capture the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula could be effectively supported by aviation. Before this period, it is necessary to hinder the enemy's use of sea routes for supply, destroy his rear communications and destroy warehouses and supply bases. Even in winter time, the slightest opportunity should be used to continue this struggle, paying special attention to the disruption of communications and strong points equipped by the enemy. To do this, it is necessary, using local airfields, to create an aviation basing system on the territory of Northern Norway and Finland and prepare it for operations in winter conditions. It is necessary to provide defense against enemy air raids of troop quartering areas, supply routes, and above all nickel mines, as well as the base that is planned to be built for the fleet.

The air base system and its supply units must be expanded in order to support the renewed attack on Murmansk at the right time with significantly larger air forces.

HITLER

That's right: Major of the General Staff Service

(signature)

The Germans were transferring their main forces to the south, hoping to achieve success in the Kandalaksha direction before winter. However, the rapidly changing situation at the front once again corrected the Fuhrer's robbery plans in a less optimistic direction. In early October, after the failure of the September offensive in the Kestenga and Kandalaksha directions, it already became clear to Hitler that it would not be possible to take Murmansk or cut the Murmansk railway before winter, which was reflected in the following OKB directive, which canceled the previous one:

OKB DIRECTIVE No. 37

Fuhrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Supreme Command of the Armed Forces.

Operations headquarters.

Department of National Defense.

No. 441696/41

Fuhrer's headquarters 10/10/1941

13 copies

1st EKZ.

Owls. secret.

For command only.

Directive No. 37

Rapidly and successfully developing events in the eastern theater of operations, as well as reports from the commander of the army "Norway" on the state of the troops and

the possibility of carrying out further operations in Finland prompt me to order the following.

1. After the bulk of the Soviet armed forces in the main theater of operations have been defeated or destroyed, there will be no need to pin down the Russian forces in Karelia by an offensive. In order to occupy Murmansk and the Rybachy Peninsula before the onset of winter, or to cut off the Murmansk railway in Central Karelia, the combat strength and offensive capability of the troops at our disposal there are insufficient; besides, the right time of the year has been missed.

Therefore, the urgent task is: to hold the occupied territory, to ensure the security of the Petsamo region with its nickel mines from attacks from land, air and sea, and to begin preparatory measures so that, starting hostilities this winter, next year, finally take over Murmansk, Rybachy Peninsula and Murmansk

railway.

Sequence of events

a) The transition of troops to the defense in advantageous positions that ensure the economy of forces; the construction of winter-type shelters for the troops and the transition to conducting combat operations in winter conditions;

6) carrying out the necessary change of troops and throwing new units to the front;

c) conducting a concentric offensive on the Murmansk railway in winter:

- Finnish troops from the southern direction to Belomorsk, Kem and, if possible, also in the direction of Loukhi;

- German troops from the Woermann region to Kandalaksha;

d) the implementation at a favorable moment of capturing, if possible, the entire territory of the Rybachy Peninsula, carrying out an offensive against Murmansk. The implementation of these operations must be planned in time in such a way that it is possible to concentrate on the desired direction the main forces and efforts of all the troops available for the offensive.

2. The immediate task of the army "Norway" should be considered: providing a solid defense in secondary sectors, regrouping formations so that it is possible to replenish the troops fighting long and hard battles with fresh reinforcements, equip them for waging war in winter conditions and at the same time change them new arrivals. In doing so, be guided by the following: a) in the mountain rifle corps, replace the 2nd and 3rd mountain rifle divisions with a reinforced 6th mountain rifle division.

One mountain rifle division should be left in northern Finland, and the other should be redeployed to the Rovaniemi region and further south. The withdrawal of these two divisions to Germany is planned by the time the 5th Mountain Rifle Division arrives in Finland (tentatively in January 1942). The mountain rifle division left in Northern Finland must be replaced by a newly formed or reorganized mountain rifle division;

6) the 163rd Infantry Division will be transferred to the disposal of the 36th Army Corps as soon as it becomes clear that there is no need for its participation in

concentric offensive in the direction of the southern shore of Lake Ladoga at the junction between the "Karelian Army" and the troops of the Army Group "North". It is planned to replace the 169th and 163rd divisions with divisions from Norway or from Germany during the winter.

3. Change of troops, including mountain rifle divisions, to be carried out in such a way that the main part of heavy weapons, property, horses and beasts of burden remains in place, that is, only personnel with light weapons are replaced. This will save time and vehicles.

4. With regard to the SS units, the following is provided: the 9th SS regiment, which is currently subordinate to the 2nd mountain rifle division, is replaced by an SS regiment staffed by Finns and Norwegians; from the SS combat group "North" and the arriving Austrian SS regiment to form a mining

rifle brigade.

The implementation of these measures will be coordinated by the Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces with other measures to replace headquarters and troops.

5. Since the Finnish High Command, at the end of these operations, plans a complete organizational restructuring of the entire Finnish army, it is necessary to change the German and Finnish units that are part of the 3rd Corps of the Finns. (The 6th Finnish division replaces the SS combat group "North"). In the future, it is planned to transfer the 3rd Finnish Army Corps under the command of Field Marshal Mannerheim.

To start new operations, Field Marshal Mannerheim will be petitioned to re-subordinate to the German troops advancing on Kandalaksha at least some small Finnish units.

6. The air force operating in Finland shall initially be entrusted, if meteorological conditions permit, with the following tasks:

a) ensure surveillance and control of the northern Norwegian and Finnish coastal strip in order to protect their own navigation and fight against enemy ships;

6) provide air defense, primarily the area of nickel mines in Petsamo, ports of unloading and strongholds of the navy; c) conduct aerial reconnaissance of the area of forthcoming operations, carry out constant raids on the enemy supply base in Murmansk, and also prevent the delivery of supplies there by sea and rail;

d) to take preparatory measures for the use of large aviation forces in order to support the actions of troops in forthcoming operations.

7. The tasks of the navy are to organize strikes against enemy transports going to Murmansk, and, to the best of their ability, ensure their own navigation in the Barents Sea. To this end, it is necessary in the shortest possible time to transfer to this area the light forces of the fleet, including torpedo boats. Kirkenes should be equipped as an auxiliary stronghold.

To ensure their navigation in the coastal strip, it is necessary to transfer additional coastal artillery batteries. Relevant

orders on this matter will be issued through the Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces.

Kirkenes and Petsamo should be additionally reinforced each separately with one battery of 210-mm guns; one battery of 280-mm guns should be installed in the Barde area.

After the capture of the Rybachy Peninsula, one heavy artillery battery should also be installed there.

8. In order to repel a possible enemy offensive against the front and the coastal flank of our defense, it is necessary to establish in the coming months especially close cooperation between the command of the army "Norway", the commands of the navy and the air force.

To facilitate this interaction, establish positions: from the naval

Fleet - "Commander of the Naval Forces in the North" and from the Air Force - "Commander of the Air Force in the North" (after the relocation of the 5th Air Fleet to Norway).

9. Instructions on carrying out these activities will be given by the Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces. Submit reports through it:

a) from the army "Norway": a calendar plan for the regrouping of troops, their proposals for the rearmament of troops so that all troops are adapted to combat operations in the tundra and forests of East Karelia; operational calculations, applications for reinforcement by parts of the RGC, as well as considerations on the issue of changing headquarters;

6) from the command of the navy and the command of the air force their detailed considerations.

10. Since the provisions of the previously issued directive No. 36 are outdated, it loses its force.

HITLER

That's right: Major of the General Staff Service

(signature)

By mid-October, the reinforced 6th mountain division, transferred from Greece, replaced the 2nd and 3rd divisions, which suffered heavy losses and, together with the Finnish troops, did not complete the task. The 2nd division was assigned to rest and manning in the Norwegian city of Kirkenes. What state this unit was in can be found out from the notes of officer Buchner: "The 2nd Mountain Rifle Division, which had been in continuous battles for two and a half months, was completely defeated, most of the mountain rangers were exterminated, and the rest were extremely exhausted ... The attack on Murmansk had to be stopped. It was quite clear that we greatly underestimated both the terrain and the enemy.

And if this division remained in the corps as its reserve, then the 3rd division, completely defeated and incapacitated, was transferred to southern Lapland, and then to Germany. Thus, from June to the end of September 1941, the mining corps "Norway" failed to break through to Murmansk and capture the city during three offensives. The corps was unable to achieve its goal, but only created a bridgehead on Litsa halfway to Murmansk at about

40 kilometers east of the border. In less than three months of fighting, the mountain corps lost about 10.5 thousand soldiers and officers from the 27.5 thousand strong in total killed and wounded.

The German command did not leave plans to resume the attack on Murmansk.

The importance of the city during the war continuously increased. If at the beginning of the war it was still mainly seen as a threat to nickel mines, then in winter, after the Arkhangelsk port froze in November, it remained the only source of allied assistance close to Moscow and Leningrad.

Therefore, to hold a foothold, which next year could serve

springboard for a throw to Murmansk, was entrusted not to the infantry, but to the 6th mountain division, which had rich experience in combat operations in mountainous conditions, broke through the Metax line in the spring of 1941, took Olympus, Athens, Larisa and participated in the capture of Crete.

After fierce battles in the summer and early autumn, the onset of polar winter brought a long lull to the bridgehead, which lasted until the spring of 1942. Although the mountain rangers were still on the bridgehead, they no longer represented a force capable of threatening Murmansk on their own.

Height 314.9

(November 7-9)

After Hitler issued directives on the transition to defense in the Murmansk direction, no major hostilities were conducted on the Litsa bridgehead until 1942. However, in November, the command of the 52nd division decided to retake the long-suffering height 314.9, from which the 58th SP was driven out by the Germans during the September offensive, by the anniversary of the October Revolution. There was no particular need to capture the hill, since behind it was a much more suitable for defense hill 275.0, which the 58th regiment did not dare to storm in July.

But the command of the division, having received the approval of the commander of the 14th Army, decided that it would not be difficult to take the height, given that the ships of the Northern Fleet and two newly formed battalions of marines were ready to provide the necessary support.

Regimental reconnaissance of the 58th Rifle Division established that the height was no more than a company of rangers (later it turned out that it was the 7th company of the 143rd regiment of the 6th mountain division, which replaced the 2nd mountain division assigned to the rear), which were in cold at night and in a blizzard, for the most part, they leave the front line for dugouts.

Given this, it was decided that one 2nd battalion of the 58th SP would be enough to capture the height. Since the capture of the height was planned in advance, the battalion had the opportunity to conduct training sessions on the heights located in the rear with a similar relief. To ensure surprise and reduce enemy resistance, it was decided to carry out an attack along the steepest slope,

where the rangers had the minimum number of firing points, and without prior artillery preparation.

On the night of November 7, the 2nd battalion, under the command of Captain Ladanov, crossed the frozen Dikoye Lake on the ice, deployed in battle formations, and moved to the partially iced rocky slopes of the height. The weather favored the operation - a strong snowstorm arose and visibility on the slopes of the height was minimal. The units were able to quietly concentrate at the firing positions of the rangers and captured the advanced positions of the Germans with one blow. There were really few rangers on them, and they could not offer serious resistance to the attackers.

However, it was not possible to develop an offensive and capture the entire height. At the trigonometric point, where there were dugouts with rangers resting, the soldiers met unexpectedly stubborn resistance. The dugouts of the rangers turned out to be abundantly watered with water, which, having frozen, formed a thick layer of ice, from

which was ricocheted not only by grenades, but even by bullets ...

The dugouts of the rangers stormed first one, and then two companies, but failed to succeed. Through numerous narrow loopholes, the huntsmen fired back from machine guns and machine guns, threw grenades out of the doors. In some places, the battle turned into hand-to-hand combat, but it was not possible to capture the dugouts. Having enough ammunition, the huntsmen stubbornly fought back all night, and their fire did not weaken.

At dawn, huntsmen from areas adjacent to the height, from other slopes and from the top, began counterattacks in order to unlock the trigonometric point. The continuing blizzard made it easier to carry out detour maneuvers, which were actively used by both sides. The company of senior lieutenant Makarov turned out to be outflanked, and the threat of encirclement loomed over it. However, the company commander managed to stop the advance of the rangers on one flank by transferring one of the squads there. And on the other flank, he completely threw back the rangers, suddenly concentrating all the machine guns in the company there.

Promotion to position.

The counterattacks of the rangers continued throughout the holiday, and all day, along with the blizzard, attempts to circumvent maneuvers continued. The company of senior lieutenant Chernokon was heavily pressed by the rangers with blows from the front, using the terrain that was convenient for this. The deputy company commander for political affairs, junior lieutenant Tortsev at the head of the squad, in turn, went to the rear of the rangers, trying to draw part of the rangers' forces away from the company. But the lack of people turned the literate

a tactical maneuver to trap himself. About a platoon of rangers acted against Tortsev's squad, who eventually managed to surround him. The squad, which offered fierce resistance to the rangers, was completely destroyed. It was not possible to unblock it in time.

Already in the evening, the 116th battalion of sailors of Captain Starovoitov was thrown to save the situation, most of which - two companies, were paratroopers of the 1st volunteer detachment of the Northern Fleet, who had gained rich combat experience in July and September battles, among whom was awarded the title of Hero on August 17, 1941 of the Soviet Union and promoted to junior lieutenant, the hero of the July battles, squad leader Vasily Kislyakov, who now commanded a platoon. The paratroopers stopped the onslaught of rangers and threw them back from Tortsev's group. Of the living in the position of the detachment, which was never occupied by the Germans, only Tortsev himself was found, lying unconscious behind a light machine gun. Almost all ammunition was used up by the squad, not a single grenade was found at the position. Tortsev himself died without regaining consciousness, from blood loss to delivery to the medical battalion. Later he was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

On November 8, a weather forecast was received. In the morning, under the cover of fog, the paratroopers approached the enemy as close as possible, and when it dissipated, they launched an attack on the southern peak of the height. Such a direction of attack was unexpected for the rangers, since the entire holiday was fought for the northern peak, on which there was a trigonometric point with well-fortified dugouts blocked at the height of the rangers. The paratroopers slowly moved up, using the folds of the terrain. They did not attack in chains, using the well-known tactics of rangers - they moved from cover to cover, trying to bypass enemy firing points in convenient places. Simultaneously with the offensive of the paratroopers, two platoons from the 2nd battalion carried out diversionary maneuvers - a platoon of junior lieutenant Yegorkin fought his way to the western slopes of the height, discarding a weak combat guard

Germans, and a platoon of junior lieutenant Serdyukov, without meeting any resistance at all, approached the eastern slopes of the height.

Gradually moving up the slope, not chasing the speed of advance, but also avoiding significant losses, the paratroopers approached the top in the evening and covered it from three sides. Divisional artillery during this long advance periodically supported the paratroopers with fire.

But in front of the peak, on which the hunters fortified, solid barbed wire barriers were stretched, located in the space that was shot through from the top. The paratroopers waited for darkness, after which a platoon under the command of junior lieutenant Kislyakov made a passage in the wire fence, away from the fortified dugouts that existed here, so that only German trenches were in front of it. After that, Kislyakov's platoon, approaching the enemy at a minimum distance, throwing grenades at the rangers, managed to break into the trenches with one throw, destroyed the rangers who were in them in hand-to-hand combat and, opening strong fire from there on the enemy's flank, made it possible for the battalion to overcome the wire fence. The rangers put up fierce resistance and withdrew only when the battalion

paratroopers managed to break behind the wire fence after the platoon. At the same time, Kislyakov's platoon, which held the trenches until the approach of the main forces of the battalion, was almost completely knocked out. Some of the sailors died and were wounded even before the capture of the German trenches, when grenades flew in both directions, some during hand-to-hand combat, the platoon suffered the last losses, ensuring the offensive of the battalion, when the hunters concentrated on the occupied trenches the fire of several 50-mm mortars. Kislyakov himself received 15 shrapnel and bullet wounds during the battle.

During the battle, a turning point occurred. The hunters did not dare to hold the dugouts, fearing that their command might not have enough strength to break through the two encirclements, and hastily retreated from the top. The 58th Regiment was finally able to gain a foothold on the southern summit of the height.

On November 9, battles were fought at both peaks of the height. Naturally, the Germans delivered the main blows to the north, and distractions to the south. Under pressure from the rangers, the northern part of the height had to be left in the evening in order to concentrate all forces on the defense of the southern. After the unblocking of the rangers, who fought for more than two days in dugouts near the trigonometric point, the German counterattacks ceased. The command of the 52nd division during the week did not give up hope of bringing the situation at the height in line with its holiday report. But massive attacks were no longer carried out, the rangers were tried to be squeezed out from the northern peak with the help of fire support from the ships of the Northern Fleet and divisional artillery. However, due to the shortage of ammunition, by November 16, these attempts were also stopped, and another clarifying report was sent to the headquarters of the 14th Army that the height was occupied "with the exception of the trigonometric point." The fact that the trigonometric point is located on the northern peak was, of course, not explained in the report.

In close combat, the rangers willingly used Soviet small arms.

The Germans, unfamiliar with the practice of "holiday offensives" and alarmed by the attempts to capture the height, imagined the prospect of a general offensive. As a result, the rangers, as in July, began to improve their defensive positions, which was carried out with purely German pedantry. As a result, on the southern flank of the 52nd division, the rangers left a height known as the "saw", as well as

all their positions in front of the battered 14th division, deploying the line of defense in this sector with the front to the south and securing themselves against a possible breakthrough to their communications leading to Titovka.

At the army headquarters, reports of this caused a stir, so it did not fit with the Soviet ideas about "active defense" and not leaving an inch of territory to the enemy. As a result, additional reconnaissance of the area was carried out, and after confirmation of the information, an order was given to urgently occupy the territory "liberated" from the enemy. And in the conditions of the harsh polar winter, the troops were forced to withdraw from positions equipped with such difficulty and again, after 1-2 kilometers, gouge trenches in the permafrost, build fortifications and dugouts, and lay roads. It was under such circumstances that the front in the Arctic moved west for the first time ...

It is not known exactly how many victims the 58th regiment cost to take the height. Among the Germans, the 7th company, which was at a height, suffered the greatest losses. Of its composition, which was surrounded, according to some reports, no more than a dozen people survived in the dugouts.

Height 314.9 was given great importance by both sides as one of the most significant defensive positions. After numerous bloody battles carried out for her, during which she passed from hand to hand more than once, the height acquired its own name. In Soviet documents, she was referred to as "Important", while the Germans nicknamed her "Steel Helmet".

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The fighting in the conditions of the Arctic in the Litsa direction had its own specific character. Due to the difficult terrain, the lack of a large number of roads, relatively small forces of the parties participated in the battles. The Germans operated practically with two mountain rifle divisions, which were opposed by two Soviet rifle divisions.

On this sector of the front, the Germans did not have an overwhelming superiority either in technology or in manpower. However, with the outbreak of hostilities, success accompanied the Germans here too. In the week that has passed since the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet command did not have time to concentrate here the forces at its disposal, quite sufficient to repel the offensive of two German divisions.

As a result, on the very first day of the offensive, the Germans managed to defeat the main forces of the 14th SD on the Titovka River, after which, in all subsequent battles, it played only an auxiliary role and the entire burden of repelling the attack of the Norway mountain corps actually fell on one 52nd rifle division. The absence of significant quantities of military equipment on the bridgehead determined another feature of the hostilities. Without tanks and armored personnel carriers,

which had nowhere to operate here, the Germans could not, accordingly, undertake wide detour maneuvers and encirclement operations.

All three German offensives boiled down, in essence, to an attempt to break through the front in one narrow sector, sometimes with the help of one or two diversionary or flanking maneuvers.

In conditions of hard-to-reach, boulder-saturated terrain with a large number of heights and hollows, the battles were mainly positional in nature and

fought for the possession of the dominant heights. Under such conditions, the line of defense was inactive and required long-term equipment, especially since it was covered by a relatively small number of troops. The passage of the few roads on the Litsa bridgehead along the coast made the use of even small landing units effective, since they almost immediately began to threaten enemy communications and had convenient positions for defense.

The Germans were never able to gather sufficient forces and means to land at least one landing force in the rear of the Soviet troops, capable of cutting the Mishukovskaya road and the column route to Ura-Guba - the main communications in the rear of the Soviet troops on the Litsa bridgehead. The command of the Northern Fleet, on the contrary, managed to prepare as many as three landing operations, of which the last one was the most significant in terms of its scale and results.

As a result, the second, most dangerous, offensive of the Germans on the Litsa bridgehead was repulsed in many respects thanks to the landing of the 325th Infantry Regiment and the 1st volunteer detachment of sailors of the Northern Fleet in the German rear. A well-armed detachment of sailors who managed to complete a 2-week training and was preparing as a unit of the first throw ensured the success of both the landing and its withdrawal after completing the assigned tasks.

The Naval Detachment continued to be an effective strike force used to solve the most difficult tasks. Later, on its basis, a separate "sea" battalion was deployed in the 52nd division.

On the rocky slopes of the heights, artillery fire was not particularly effective, much more damage was caused by the use of mortars and attack aircraft. However, aviation was used by both sides on a much smaller scale than in other sectors of the front.

The Germans were forced to constantly transfer their squadrons from one direction of the Karelian Front to another, so the Germans used aviation on the Litsa bridgehead only in especially important cases. But its use was exceptionally effective due to well-established interaction with the infantry. Soviet aviation could not boast of this, which was clearly shown by the air support for the unsuccessful August attempt by the Soviet counteroffensive.

It turned out to be most convenient to use sea hunters as landing craft for the specific conditions of the Polar Theater of Operations. The inherent speed and maneuverability of these nimble 3-screw boats helped them successfully defend themselves from both artillery fire and air strikes. In the future, torpedo boats also began to be successfully used for landings.

The rangers' tactics turned out to be quite effective in the conditions of the Arctic, they competently bypassed the enemy's firing points and skillfully acted in small groups. Soviet tactics, initially based on the principles of active defense, gradually began to approach the German one, and then surpassed it. By the autumn of 1941, Soviet units were already successfully operating in small groups, actively using maneuvers in defense and offensive. The skills and experience gained were used with increasing success in the bridgehead battles that took place in subsequent years.

The resilience of the Soviet units on the defensive thwarted German plans to capture the base of the Northern Fleet in Polyarny and the ice-free port of Murmansk. The heavy losses suffered by the mining corps forced him to stop

offensive even after the fresh reinforced 6th Mountain Rifle Division and the 9th SS Infantry Regiment were transferred to the bridgehead. The Germans did not dare to use their last fresh units allocated for this theater of operations in the offensive. The 6th Mountain Rifle Division replaced the battered 2nd and 3rd Mountain Rifle Divisions. Since October 1941, in accordance with Hitler's directives, the German troops went over to the defensive, in which all the remaining long years of the war were, until the moment when it was finally broken through.

Address to the reader (instead of a conclusion)

So you have read the first book entirely devoted to the first landings of the Great Patriotic War.

The theme of the landing operations of this war is much more than one book can accommodate. And therefore, in this book, it was not about all the landings of the war, and not even about all the landing operations of the first year of the war, but only about three of them.

In the theme of the landing operations of the Great Patriotic War, there are no and cannot be secondary operations. There are simply more and less well-known and more and less large-scale.

In terms of the drama of events, the intensity of the battles, the difficulty of making decisions, each of these operations is worthy of a separate book. This is exactly what the author will try to do over time.

Based on the example of the three operations that I have managed to describe, I think it is clear that each landing operation deserves a detailed and complete presentation. And, I think, you have already noticed that not a single landing operation is similar to another, just as there are no two similar battles for those who participate in them.

If I managed to convince the reader that each of the landing operations carried out during the Great Patriotic War deserves his attention, I will consider my task completed.

If at the same time you, the reader, begin to better understand why and how the described events took place, known to you only from the dry lines of reference books, where only brief "questionnaire" data remain from the battles - when and where it happened and how many and what parts are in it participated, if you learn something new and unexpected for yourself and take a different look at a couple of lines in a thick reference book, I think you, the reader, will not regret reading this book.

Peninsula

Fishing

SWEDEN,

9Sb = 9th infantry. Regiment "SS"

The scheme of hostilities in the Murmansk direction June 29 - September 18, 1941
G.

And if you, the reader, can fall in love with military history as I once did, and feel the need to replenish your knowledge on these and other topics of military history, see in them dramatic events of interest to you, of which, in fact, is, I will consider that the time that has gone into writing this book has not been wasted.

List of used abbreviations

AP - Artillery Regiment

VS - Military Council

GAP - Howitzer Artillery Regiment

DVF - Danube Military Flotilla

OVR - Protection of the water area (naval base) OOR - Odessa defensive area

OdVO - Odessa Military District

OIAE - Separate Fighter Aviation Squadron SD - Rifle Division

SK - Rifle Corps

SP - Rifle Regiment

SNiS - Surveillance and Communication Service

Kaperang - Captain of the first rank

Kavtorang - Captain of the second rank

Commander - Corps Commander

Commander - division commander

KP - Command post

Mangroup - maneuverable group

Software - Border Detachment

PNSh - Assistant Chief of Staff of the FKP -
Flagship Command Post Flagmin - Flagship
Miner Flagart - Flagship Artilleryman of
the Black Sea Fleet - Black Sea Fleet

CHOPS - Black Sea Detachment of Border Vessels ChVS -
Member of the Military Council

Shtakor - Corps Headquarters

Shtadiv - Division Headquarters

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